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"For Percival."

CHAPTER XXII.

A THORN IN THE FLESH.



WOULD cheerfully," said Mrs. Middleton to Percival a few days later, "very cheerfully give you five pounds—now, this minute—if you could tell me how to say something *politely* to Mrs. James."

"Some one particular thing?" the young man replied from the depths of his easy-chair. "Let me hear what it is. Never earned five pounds in my life—it would be a new sensation. I'll buy you something with it, Sissy—shall I? Eh? Oh, she's gone!"

"It isn't earned yet," said Aunt Harriet drily, "and I don't think it will be easy."

"You excite my curiosity. What is it?"

"Well! next time Mrs. James and I have a talk, how am I to say—quite civilly, and in a lady-like way—'That is the biggest—fib I have heard since the one you told at breakfast.' Now, Percival?"

"Adieu, all hopes of five pounds!" said Percival. "You must say it right out, or she wouldn't see it."

"And then it could hardly be civil."

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"What is the latest novelty, by the way?" he asked, after a pause.

"Oh! I don't know. That the Benhams are related to Sir Walter Courtenay of Langley Priors—I don't think there has been one since that. I like her audacity! What will the woman say next?"

"Can't tell," said Percival; "her imagination far outsoars mine."

"Well, I never saw much of her before, but I don't think she used to be as bad as this," fumed Aunt Harriet. "If only she wouldn't kiss me! And the fuss she makes with Godfrey—calling him 'papa!' too, when she wants to be so lively and insinuating. It's sickening! She makes me think of those nasty boa creatures, licking you all over before they gulp you down! I can't believe she's Horace's mother—I really can't. I don't feel as if she could be."

"It does seem absurd," he replied. "Do you think he was changed at nurse? I don't see how it could be managed otherwise," he mused, frowning in the effort to construct a theory. "I doubt if Mrs. James could be changed in any way; and even with Horace—there are difficulties——"

The distant sound of a harsh high voice made Mrs. Middleton leap to her feet.

"Mercy on us! here she comes! I thought she was safe in her room for an hour at least."

"I think," said Percival, in his very softest tone, "that that is the parrot screeching in the library."

"Oh! of course!" Aunt Harriet sank back relieved, only to exclaim the next moment, "Percival! the parrot doesn't wear a silk dress!"

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "it is Mrs. James," and was out of the window and on the terrace in a moment.

She came in, with a rustling sweep of drapery, and what was a big demonstrative woman's notion of a gliding walk.

"Oh, here is Aunt Harriet!" she exclaimed; "I asked Sissy where you were, just now, and she told me she thought you were here."

"I'm here," said Mrs. Middleton. (Brevity is the soul of wit, they say, so it may be presumed this speech was witty. At any rate it tripped the conversation up as a witty remark will occasionally do. There was a little pause before Mrs. James spoke again.)

"Dear Aunt Harriet—busy as ever—knitting away." She sat down on the sofa, and it creaked a little; her stiff black silk, with its violet satin trimming, swept over Mrs. Middleton's lap. The little, delicately-apparelled old lady was engulfed and fondled.

Mrs. James Thorne was fifty-four. She called herself forty-three, and always spoke as if she had been very young indeed at the time of her marriage, six-and-twenty years before. "A mere chit—just out of the schoolroom; I ought to have been in it a good deal longer, I'm afraid, so learned as people are nowadays. But poor dear papa couldn't

say 'No !' when his little girl coaxed him to let her have a pony. And the hounds met close by, you know, and then—why then

The old, old story was told again,

as that dear, sweet—what's her name? Floribel?—Claribel says. Very naughty, no doubt! but young people will be young people, won't they?"

She smilingly alluded to herself in this style before the Squire on one occasion.

"Ah, yes!" he said, without a quiver of voice or muscle, though he could perfectly recall the big young woman of eight-and-twenty as he spoke. "Goodish-sized pony, wasn't it? I remember it."

She thought it was.

"Yes, yes," he repeated, apparently meditating, "nice pony." He seemed to call the points of the imaginary animal to remembrance. "Didn't your father get him from Jack Lawson?" he asked suddenly; "you remember Jack Lawson?"

(Rumour had linked Mr. Lawson's name with Miss Benham's from one end of the county to the other, while James Thorne was still a white-faced little schoolboy.)

"Oh, yes!" she said, looking him full in the face; "I recollect him, of course. Little black man, wasn't he?"

This was very creditable—Mr. Jack Lawson having been big and sandy-haired. Approval dawned in the Squire's eyes.

"Exactly!" he said, and added thoughtfully, "a good memory is one of the greatest of blessings when one is advancing in years." She was rather perplexed.

Mrs. James was not a bad-looking woman. From her girlhood onward she had always been somewhat too high-coloured and strongly-built for beauty; but her features were regular and her figure good. She might have made a grand Amazon; but her affectation of juvenility, her sentimental reminiscences and insinuating smiles, were hideously at variance with her masculine appearance. "Hunting Harry," as Miss Harriet Benham had been called of old, hunted now with playful glances and little sighing allusions to her youth, as if she missed it like a friend she had just lost.

Percival hated her, and behaved to her with stately courtesy. "She has such a fearful voice," he said one day to Sissy.

"It isn't pleasant," said Sissy, stooping over him as he sat, and putting some violets in his coat. "Yours is."

"I should think hers wasn't pleasant. If they were going to hang me, and she had to pronounce sentence—which she would do with great pleasure—I think I should ask to be executed at once, and let her rasp it out at her leisure when I was beyond its reach."

"You always speak so softly and lazily when she is near," said Sissy, "I think you aggravate her."

"Do you really?" Percival was so pleased that he sat up. "Dear me! If I got some of Aunt Harriet's voice jujubes, and sucked one between every sentence, do you think it might make me more mellifluous still?"

"Well, it would make you slower," said Sissy; "I think you would never leave off talking to her then."

"There's something in that," said Percival, sinking back. "Better leave well alone, perhaps."

"After all, her voice isn't her fault," Sissy suggested.

"It's one of them. She *could* hold her tongue."

"Isn't that rather hard? Don't be an unkind boy."

"It is hard," he allowed. "People shouldn't be judged by voices, or noses, or complexions, or such things, of course. Take hair, for instance. I should not like to be unjust to a woman because her hair was pale drab, or because it turned grey at twenty-five, or because it was such a minute wisp that one small hair-pin would restrain the whole. I don't think our coloured brothers happy in their style of hair, but I don't blame them for it. But I am not superior to all prejudices—I admit it frankly, though with sorrow. I object strongly to anyone in whose hair I detect a glowing shade of purple. Just get Mrs. James between you and the light——"

But we have left Mrs. Thorne seated on the sofa by Aunt Harriet. "You don't mind my calling you Aunt Harriet, do you?" she says sweetly. "Perhaps I ought to say Mrs. Middleton; but didn't my poor dear James always call you Aunt Harriet? And my own name, too,—I always feel so fond of my namesakes, as if they belonged to me somehow. Don't you?"

"I never had much to do with any namesakes of mine, except one maid," says the old lady reflectively, "and she had such dreadful warts on her hands! But I was able to give her the best of characters, thank goodness!"

"How droll you are!" Mrs. James replies, with her head on one side. She holds a small portrait a long way off, and lifts a gold-rimmed glass to examine it.

"What have you got there?" Aunt Harriet inquires.

Mrs. James sighs, and turns the picture a little towards her companion, who puts on her spectacles, and peers curiously at it. It is a painting on ivory of Maurice Thorne, the Squire's favourite son, who was drowned so many years ago.

"Good gracious! Maurice's miniature out of the library! My dear Mrs. James, excuse me, but Godfrey never allows that to be touched."

"Oh, he wouldn't mind My having it for a few moments, just to recall old days. He would understand My feelings, I am sure. Don't be afraid, dear Aunt Harriet, if he should come in, I will take all the blame. I will say 'The fault is mine, papa, Entirely Mine—

you'll forgive me, won't you?' I assure you, Aunt Harriet, he shan't scold you—I will tell him you warned me, but that I was so wilful—and felt so sure he would understand my interest in poor dear Maurice."

"Godfrey will not scold me—I am not *afraid*," says the old lady, with quivering emphasis. She is almost boiling over with suppressed indignation at the idea of Mrs. James defending her from her brother. Her knitting progresses in a jerky manner, and she has not discovered that she has dropped a stitch in the last row. "It would be odd if Godfrey and I didn't understand each other. And you must pardon me, but I don't quite see your particular interest in Maurice."

"In poor dear Maurice?" Mrs. James repeats, as if Mrs. Middleton had forgotten the proper adjectives for anyone who happened to be dead, and she would delicately suggest them. "You don't see my interest in him? How strange! I always thought it so true, what someone says, somewhere, you know, that a woman never feels quite the same towards a man who . . . even if she . . . Oh, I can't remember exactly how it goes, but it isn't out of my own head. I saw it somewhere, and I said 'How very true!' One must feel a *little* differently towards him, I think, though one cannot feel quite as *he* would wish."

Mrs. Middleton stares blankly at her visitor. Astonishment and disgust have risen to such a height within her, that, unable to find fitting expression in her face, they find none at all. What does this woman mean? That Maurice—*Maurice*—Oh, it is too much! ("My dear," she said afterwards, "if I had spoken I must have screamed at her!")

Mrs. James, still with the portrait in her hand, sighs, half smiles, and puts up her eyeglass for another survey. "So like!" she murmurs. Handsome Maurice, trim and neat in the fashion of thirty years ago, looks out of the miniature frame with wide clear eyes, and proudly curved mouth. One might fancy an expression of scornful appeal on the delicately-painted features, as if he saw the coarsely-complexioned, middle-aged face leaning over him, and exclaimed, "Mate me with *her*!" She turns the bright young fellow a little more to the light, and dusts him pensively with her lace-edged handkerchief.

"Curious!" she says. "Of course poor dear Maurice was *handsomer*—there could be no doubt of that."

"Handsomer than whom?" Aunt Harriet is growing desperate.

"Handsomer than poor dear James. I've got *him* in a brooch. It must have been done when he was about the same age, I should think."

"I daresay I'm a stupid old woman," says Aunt Harriet, who has compressed a multitude of mistakes into a row or two of her work, and is going fiercely on, "but I don't quite see *what* was curious. One of them was pretty sure to be handsomer than the other, unless they were twins, and you couldn't tell which was which,"

"Dear Aunt Harriet—how practical she is!" Mrs. James murmurs in a fondly patronizing voice. "No, I was thinking how curious it is that

Love will still be lord of all,

as they say. Poor dear Maurice—handsomer—older, (and that is always a charm when one is *very* young, isn't it?) and the heir too. And yet it was poor dear James who was to be my fate!"

"Ah, I suppose it was obliged to be James," says Mrs. Middleton vaguely. Her companion darts a keen glance at her, as if suspecting a hidden sarcasm, but the old lady is examining her knitting with newly-aroused curiosity, and seems startled and innocent. Mrs. James covers half Maurice's face with her hand and gazes at the forehead, partly shaded with silky dark hair.

"Doesn't it remind you a little of our dear Sissy?" she says.

"Sissy! Why should it be like Sissy? Why there wasn't a drop of the same blood in their veins!"

"It reminds me of her," Mrs. James persists. "Aunt Harriet, do you know I think the dear child is throwing herself away? Surely she might have done much better."

"It's rather late now," says Aunt Harriet,

"With her beauty, and her money—and he with no fortune—no expectations—and nothing to look at. Do you recollect Sarah Percival, ages ago, in her queer bonnets, singing out of a great hymn-book in the rectory pew? What poor Alfred could see in her I never could imagine. Such a tawny, unformed, mulatto sort of a girl; and Percival *is* a Percival, there's no doubt of that. Such a complexion, and that unfortunate curliness—it makes one think there must be some negro blood somewhere."

Percival! With his clear olive skin, his firmly set lips, his grave eyes, and the smooth curves of hair about his forehead—Percival like a negro! Percival who carried himself so proudly, and who always had an indescribable air as if he had just stepped out of some romance or poem! Mrs. Middleton cannot help laughing. "I don't see it," she says; "and I saw Sarah Percival two or three times, and thought her a handsome girl."

"So she was," says the Squire, opening the door. "What's the joke?" For Mrs. Middleton is laughing still. She has given her suppressed emotions the rein, and relieves them in this manner, while her companion sits by her, amazed and half offended at the outburst. She cannot answer for a moment, and meanwhile Mr. Thorne has taken the miniature from Mrs. James in a matter-of-fact way, which does not admit of the threatened apology. Mrs. Middleton finds breath to explain.

"It's nothing, Godfrey. Only Mrs. James thinks Percival like a negro!"

"Now, really, Aunt Harriet, it is too bad," the lady interposes; "you shouldn't repeat my little random speeches."

"Too bad, Harriet," says her brother. "Don't you see that it is impossible"—he looks at the portrait as he speaks—"that Mrs. James should appreciate my favourites? Shall we go to luncheon?" He offers his arm to his daughter-in-law. She takes it with a sweet smile, and turns away her head for a moment, with a face like a thunder-cloud.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT IS LOVE?

"I'm glad Mrs. James isn't *my* mother," said Sissy, confidentially to Percival.

"So am I," he replied, drily. "I shouldn't care to have to emigrate immediately after our marriage."

"She does crush me so when she kisses me. She made quite an impression of her malachite brooch on my face this morning. It hurt so—is it gone?"

She turned a cheek like a delicate rose-leaf to the light for his inspection. "Horace seems very fond of her, doesn't he?" she went on.

"They watch each other, as if each played cat to the other's mouse," Percival replied. "If that is being very fond, never were couple so attached before."

"Percival," Sissy hesitated, "I don't think she always tells the truth."

"What barefaced falsehood has forced you to see that?"

"This morning she came in and held out a letter, and, when she saw me, she said to him, 'From your Aunt Matilda, my dear.' That's her sister, you know. But once, a long while ago, Horace had a letter from Miss Benham on his birthday, and we laughed at it, for it was shaky, and just as if she had scratched it with a pin; and this was great round writing—like a boy's—and as thick, oh, ever so thick!"

"Perhaps Miss Benham has taken to black her letters with a brush," Percival suggested.

"And Horace took it and got quite pink."

"Perhaps he is very fond of his Aunt Matilda too. Sissy, should you mind very much if I went away for a few days?"

"Went away—why?"

"I think it would be best. I shouldn't like to have any quarrel or unpleasantness, just now especially. Horace and I don't get on quite so well as we used, dear. I don't think it is his doing altogether; I think Mrs. James has something to answer for. Or—who knows?—it might be the letter from Aunt Matilda put him out a little."

She looked doubtfully up at him. "But—must you go?" she said.

"Horace won't stay very long."

"That is why I must, I think. We don't want him to get into

trouble, do we? My grandfather would take my part, right or wrong, and we should break Aunt Harriet's heart."

"Yes—go," hanging her head sadly.

"It will only be for a few days. Don't look so mournful; you'll have enough of me soon, believe me."

"I wish I were sure of that," she answered, in an eager whisper.

"Wish you were sure you would be tired of me one of these days? Well, that's a droll wish, you strange child. Look up, and tell me what you mean by it."

"I mean I want all of you, I think," and she laid her head on his shoulder.

Percival was silent for a moment. She was his darling, his pride. At a word, a glance, he would have laid down his life for her. But as she spoke it flashed upon him that she possessed but a small portion of that life. What multitudes of thoughts, fancies, longings, memories, had gone to make up the five-and-twenty years of his existence! Some of them were dim floating phantoms, which would be transformed if they were clothed in any words whatever. And there were political day-dreams, of Reform, (general—and with a big R,) and dreams of something beyond politics—of the future of Humanity (with a big H). How could he explain these to Sissy? She would be bewildered, if indeed her soul, fenced and pure, did not shrink from some of his unfettered aspirations after good. She knew a little of the ordinary level of his life, but he knew of thoughts which had risen high above it, when his soul was drawn like a mighty tide God-ward, and of thoughts which had sunk far below it. Could he have told her of the first, she would have thought him a miracle of perfection. Could he have told her of the last, the red which mounted to his brow would have stained her whiteness with shame. In neither case would she have better understood him, rather, fatally misunderstood him. If he could not truly possess those lofty impulses, neither was he truly possessed by the lower ones. Must it always be so between man and woman, he wondered, as he stood with his arm about Sissy. Or was the fault in her, or in himself? Did he even know himself? What dim abysses of thought would open in his mind sometimes, as he lay in wakeful midnight dreams! What unexpected fancies would spring up and blossom in his brain! Could one human being ever know another? Hardly—but then what was love? Perhaps only a germ of divination here, which should ripen into knowledge in a far-off eternity. He could fancy Judith Lisle, for instance, reading his soul in some new and more transparent life, and if it were a purer soul, which had no need to flinch, he thought it would be a pleasant thing to be penetrated by that quiet gaze. Man's isolation here might be unavoidable, but something in the shadowy loneliness of thought rather reminded him of the dusky gloom in which a cuttlefish shrouds itself from unwelcome pursuers. He liked to fancy Judith. . . *Judith!* And all the while his arm was round Sissy's waist!

"My dear child," he said hurriedly, "take the best of me—you don't want all. You looked charming the other night in those pearls my grandfather gave you. All the better that you were content with the pearls, and did not insist on taking the fish and the shells in your pocket."

She laughed, drawing closer to him. Then she smiled, then she sighed. "Give me just what you like, Percival; it will always be more than all the rest of the world put together."

He kissed her. "What have I done to deserve all this?" he said. And he went away, musing, to announce his approaching departure to his grandfather.

He had only hinted at the cause in his talk with Sissy. He had had something very like a quarrel with his cousin that morning. Horace, lying back in an easy-chair, had attacked him as he stood in his favourite attitude on the rug, reading the *Times*. He had answered lightly at first, refolding his paper, and beginning a fresh column; but Horace had persisted in pouring forth fresh reproaches, interrupted from time to time by his terrible fits of coughing. Those coughing fits were more eloquent than words could have been. Percival, glancing at him, thought that he had never before realised the full significance of the mediæval "Dances of Death." It would hardly have seemed strange or unnatural had he seen a skeleton leaning, with dry arms folded, on the back of the chair in which Horace lay, disputing about his rights and wrongs. He could even fancy how the spectre, before putting out its bony hand, would look at him over his cousin's head, as much as to say, "You and I understand all about it, don't we? But won't he be surprised when I——eh?" And without any such ghastly imaginings, the contrast between the two young men was terrible enough. Percival could see it, for he had turned round, and stood nearly facing the mirror, where his reflection confronted him, erect, strong, and with a pleasantly defiant look of health and well being. Though he was always pale rather than otherwise, there was a slight colour on his cheek, not a mere surface tint, but showing that the blood coursed warmly beneath the olive skin. His lips were red, his glance was bright, as if he were darkly glowing with abundant life. And Horace lay back in his chair, frail, slim, and bloodless, chafing his transparent hands. He had a beauty of his own; his eyes were almost painfully brilliant, and two spots of vivid pink flushed the whiteness of his face. How could Percival do anything but listen to him with the gentlest patience? Yet he was sorely tried. It is not pleasant to be taxed with wronging a man behind his back, and playing Jacob's part, especially when poor Esau has not been hunting and enjoying himself, but was sent to the south of France for a last chance.

"Don't let us quarrel, Horace," Percival had said. "Yes, what you say is true enough. When I came here first, five or six years ago, many a fellow in your position would have made himself uncommonly disagree-

able, and you didn't. You met me almost like a brother. You may be sure I shall remember that."

"I don't want your memory," sneered Horace from his chair; "I want justice."

"Be just then," Percival replied, with as it were a hint of inflexibility in his tone. "Is it not right and natural that I should be often at Brackenhill during this last winter, Sissy being to me—what she is?"

"Oh, it was all Sissy, no doubt," said Horace, and then there was a prolonged pause. Percival stood by, watching the slender frame shaken by the terrible cough. He had an absurd feeling, as if he were ashamed of himself, when he saw Horace struggling with it, and then leaning back utterly spent and feeble, with the painful flush brighter than ever on his cheeks. It seemed to him that he, being so strong and well, ought to have borne the pain, instead of the poor fellow who looked up after a moment, took his handkerchief from his lips, and tried to go on.

"This was my home once," he said; "you can't deny it. And now I haven't a home I suppose, for God knows this is none. My grandfather treats me like a visitor, and fixes the length of my stay. Sissy couldn't so much as say she was glad to see me when we met. Aunt Harriet——"

"Nonsense," said Percival. "Why, you are the apple of her eye!"

"Do you think I can't see the difference?" Horace demanded. "And I know who has done it all behind my back. Well, Percival, I suppose you'll enjoy it—I shouldn't."

"Horace, listen to me. I can't stand this." He felt, as he spoke, as if it were rather mean to overpower his cousin's feeble utterance with his strong voice. "Of course I have been here oftener of late—it was only natural. But as to my attempting to supplant you, or doing anything behind your back that I wouldn't have done with you here, you know perfectly well it isn't true—or you would know if you were more yourself."

"Stop," said Horace, as the other turned away. "If it isn't true—prove it."

"Prove it!" said Percival, with his head high in the air.

"Say, once and for all, that you are not trying for Brackenhill. Say you'll not take it even if he offers to leave it to you—he has no right. Of course, if I died, that would be another thing. But swear you'll not have it while I live."

Percival spoke instinctively. "No, I'll not swear either way."

"Then we'll fight it out," said the feeble voice from the armchair. "To the bitter end, as they are so fond of saying now."

"Fight—nonsense!" Percival answered. "I'm not going to fight you, my dear fellow, nor you me. You see everything awry to-day. I say I won't make any promises. I hate promises—attempts to make a moment eternal, bonds which are never needed unless they chafe. So I won't pledge myself to anything definite, and you instantly take it for granted that I am pledged to cheat you."

"Put all that stuff about promises into a magazine article—I needn't read it," said Horace, aiming at a cool and scornful demeanour. "I only want to know what you mean."

"I have told you."

"Percival, it is my right, and you know it," the invalid exclaimed. For a moment Percival almost hesitated. The excessive anxiety which was visible on his cousin's face surprised him, and touched him with the kind of pity which makes a man's heart ache, while he can hardly repress a smile. Here was this poor dying fellow in agonies about his inheritance, when in all probability his grandfather would outlive him. It was as if a prisoner, ordered out for execution, should be anxious about having a particular dinner awaiting him, done to a turn, in case a reprieve should arrive on the scaffold. Why not humour the sick man in his whim? No—he hated promises. His prudence forbade him to set foot in a labyrinth of which he had not the clue.

"It is my right," Horace repeated. "And I have my grandfather's word."

"You have his word?"

"Yes—on one condition, that is."

"What condition? No, I have no business to ask that. If you have kept it——"

"No fear of my not keeping it," said Horace, with something like triumph in his eyes.

"If you have his word, what more can you want?"

"You know you can turn him round your finger," Horace answered.

"Well, you must do your worst. From this time forward I shall know what I have to expect. We'll fight it out."

"No, we won't do anything of the kind."

"Which means," said Horace, "that I shall fight openly, and you'll fight with professions of friendship. As you please."

It would have been nearly impossible not to think that these terrible coughing fits came at very convenient times. But it was quite impossible not to perceive their painful reality. Percival was silenced again.

"Most likely you'll win—I'd advise anyone to back you," said Horace hoarsely. There was something grotesque, and almost terrible, in the feeble obstinacy which clung ever to the one thought. "Only you'll know now that, winning or losing, you have nothing to expect from me. You quite understand?" His eyes glittered, as he looked up at his cousin. He seemed determined to fix a quarrel on him. "You won't expect any further friendship."

Percival had been gazing thoughtfully into the mirror again, until Horace was able to speak. Perhaps that accounted for the quiet answer.

"We won't discuss our friendship now. I quite understand that I am to expect nothing but high tragedy till further notice; I prefer something not quite so much beyond me, for my everyday life; so I think I'll say good-bye for the present."

"You may sneer," said Horace, "but I mean what I say."

"So do I," said Percival. "I very decidedly mean that it takes two to make a quarrel, and I am not going to be one of them. Here—do you care to look at the paper?" And laying it down by his cousin's side, he went off, whistling softly to himself, and leaving Horace to look sideways at the *Times*, as if it were the deadliest of insults.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GODFREY HAMMOND ON BIRD-CATCHING.

AN evening or two later Percival walked into Godfrey Hammond's room, to its owner's great surprise. "I thought you were at Brackenhill," he said.

"So I was, till Saturday."

"Come up to get things ready?"

"Come up for a little peace; and to leave a little peace there. Mrs. James is too fond of me."

"What?" said Hammond.

"Oh, it's all right," Percival replied; "she is much too fond of me, to my face. But she makes it all even when my back is turned."

"So you have left her in possession?"

"Well, I came to the conclusion that the same house couldn't hold us, unless it were a good many sizes bigger than Brackenhill. And I couldn't take her by the shoulders and turn her out of it, as it wasn't mine."

"H'm," said Godfrey. "How does she get on with the Squire?"

"Charmingly. He sees right through her, and she is blissfully unconscious of it."

"And what is she like to look at?" said Hammond. "I don't believe I've seen her for twenty years. Hunting Harry, as we called her, used to be handsome—for those who liked the sort."

Percival shrugged his shoulders. "Well, for a woman of her age, she is handsome now, for those who like the sort. Only she comes marching along in a 'Who comes here? A grenadier' fashion, and when the story ought to go on with a good wholesome pot of beer, or something equally matter of fact, you get a dose of stale rosewater sentiment in a rasping voice."

"And is she very fond of the Squire?"

Percival nodded. "Fonder than she is of me, and that's saying a good deal. As complimentary as—as what shall I say?—as a testimonial to someone you never want to see again."

"Ought not you to be looking after things a little?"

The young man smiled. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird," he said.

"That's Solomon, isn't it? Well, I daresay it may be true enough—of birds. I never tried it, but I can fancy a knowing old bird watching the process of spreading the net with lively interest, and its head very much on one side, and then ungratefully flying off to an unattainable tree. But if he meant it for men, I deny it utterly. It is just the net that a man sees that he walks straight into. He can't leave it alone and go away. He must show everyone how plainly he sees it, and how perfectly he understands the principle on which the snare is arranged, and how very much closer he can venture in safety than anyone else could. In fact, there is really *no* danger for him. And the next thing you know, there he is, right in the middle of it, explaining that he always meant to walk into it and get caught, one of these fine days."

"Very true, I daresay," said Percival. "But I don't think Mrs. James will do much with my grandfather. Nor do I see that Horace and I need clash in any way."

"No; I suppose not," said Godfrey. He thought of Horace's father dying twenty years earlier, as Horace was dying now. "I suppose not," he repeated. "He'll go abroad again before the winter comes, won't he?"

Percival started when he saw the direction Hammond's thoughts had taken. "Yes—I hope so—that is—if—" He stopped abruptly.

"Ah, you think he'll be past that? Ever see anyone in a decline before?"

The other shook his head.

"Probably you think him in more immediate danger than he really is. Poor Jim was a long while ill, I remember." He rubbed his hard white hands together as he spoke, and gazed at his great signet ring, as if all the past lay hidden beneath its onyx surface.

"Godfrey," said Percival abruptly, "I came away partly because of Horace. He wants to quarrel with me; he fancies I'm trying to supplant him. His thoughts are terribly set on Brackenhill, poor fellow, though what he can want with Brackenhill I hardly know. There's something ghastly in it to me, since it can only be for himself. He wanted me to swear I wouldn't take it while he lived. I hope I wasn't cruel to deny the poor fellow his fancy—if it really *was* a fancy, and not an excuse for a quarrel. But I hate promises I can't understand. Of course my grandfather would leave it to him, that was settled ages ago. I won't do anything unfair; he ought to know that; but why am I to pledge myself in the dark?"

"Mrs. James isn't dying, if Horace is, poor fellow!" said Godfrey. "Perhaps she has some little scheme. Of course you were right enough, Percival, you always were a prudent young man."

Percival felt as if he coloured. He passed his hand quickly over his face. "I'm not so sure of that."

"Not like Horace," Godfrey went on. "He narrowly escaped getting into the Squire's black books last year, irretrievably too, at the

Agricultural Show. How time goes! we shall have it here again directly!"

"What did he do?"

"It was those Blake girls. The Squire thought there was something between him and Addie, and he vowed he wouldn't have one of them at Brackenhill; he'd make it into an asylum for idiots sooner. I hardly think he'd have pardoned *you*, Percival, if you had fallen in love with Lottie just then."

"There was no fear."

"So it seems. I don't know why he should have been so furious, either; the Blakes were better than the Benhams. But he was. I think he threatened Master Horace, and then, as it happened, they went away; so it blew over. Where are they now?"

"Lottie and her mother are abroad somewhere; I'm sure I don't know where. Addie is with that half-brother of hers, who got most of the money."

"Addie was worth all the others put together," said Godfrey.

Percival shook his head. That glow of pity and brotherly sympathy, which was kindled in his heart on the hillside a year before, had not died out. "I like Lottie best," he said simply, as he rose to go.

Godfrey went out with him, asking about Mrs. Middleton and Sissy. At the head of the stairs he paused. "Talking of old friends, did you hear that Miss Lisle's engagement was off?"

Percival was a couple of steps below him. He flung his head back a little defiantly. "Why, yes—months ago."

"Ah, of course." Godfrey lowered his voice. "Young Marchmont was a lucky fellow to get his dismissal."

"I don't see his luck. Rather the other way."

"You haven't looked at this evening's paper?"

"No. What has young Marchmont got?"

"Nothing. But Lisle's bank has smashed, and they say he isn't to be found."

"My God!" cried Percival, "you don't mean that!"

Hammond nodded. "Bolted. Marchmont has had a lucky escape. I suppose it's an awful crash."

"And Judith—Miss Lisle—how will she bear it? If I were Marchmont—if I'd ever loved a girl, I'd give the world to have the right to stand by her at such a time as that."

"Don Quixote! I won't betray you to St. Cecilia," Hammond laughed a little enviously. "Why you are a lucky fellow too, Percival. Two or three years ago, before you came of age, he was your guardian, wasn't he? Much you'd have seen of your money if the smash had come then! I say—take care, there!"

The young man, who was going downstairs in a bewildered way, like one in a dream, stumbled, and caught at the rail. "Confound it, Godfrey, you've got a loose stair-rod, or something! Nearly broke my

neck!" He recovered himself a little. "I can't believe it yet. Are you sure it's true? That he has *gone*?"

"I'm afraid there's no doubt," said Hammond.

"And left her to face it all? Well, he was my father's friend; but —" and Percival used some language which would not have been suitable for a young ladies' school. It might even have been thought a shade too forcible for a religious paper in a passion.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF A HERMIT CRAB.

Connaissez-vous une bête qu'on nomme *bernard l'ermite*? C'est un très-petit homard, gros comme une sauterelle, qui a une queue sans écailles. Il prend la coquille qui convient à sa queue, l'y fourre, et se promène ainsi au bord de la mer. Hier j'en ai trouvé un dont j'ai cassé la coquille très-proprement sans écraser l'animal, puis je l'ai mis dans un plat d'eau de mer. Il y faisait la plus piteuse mine.

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE—*Lettres à une Inconnue.*

It was a wonderful thing for Percival Thorne to be seen tearing along a railway platform in furious haste. He so prided himself on never being in a hurry, that he was conscious of a painful loss of dignity and self-respect on such an occasion. But the afternoon after his conversation with Godfrey Hammond, he had dashed into the station, taken a ticket for Fordborough, and leapt into the nearest carriage without a glance at its occupant.

The train puffed slowly off. Even over London the May sunlight hung like a golden glory, and, as they glided out of the station, and quickened their pace through the green fields, the sky was the deepest, purest blue. Percival did not see it. He was still discomposed, feeling in his pockets to see what he had, and what he had left behind, (as people always do when they jump in in a hurry,) and a little out of breath still. Presently he crossed his legs with a sigh of relief. After which he took off his hat, pushed back his hair, and felt better:

Then the lady, who was dressed in black, and sat in the furthest corner, put up her veil, leaned forward, and said "Percival!"

"Why, Addie! I didn't know you!" He moved to the seat opposite hers, and, as their hands and eyes met, he thought of that evening in Langley Wood.

"I had the advantage of leisure," smiled Addie. "I don't suppose I should have been undetected long."

"You are going down to Fordborough?"

"Yes. We hope to let our house there, and I am going down to make some final arrangements, and to bring a few things away."

"Rather a dreary errand. You don't think of living at Fordborough any more, then?"

"Not at present. I hope we shall some day."

In Percival's state of mind it was pleasanter to question than to be questioned. So he proceeded to ascertain that she was with Oliver, as he had supposed, and that Oliver was a dear, good, darling fellow; that they were staying at a little seaside village, and that Oliver was thinking about a yacht. But she interrupted his questions at last. "And how does the world treat you?" she asked.

"Very much as I deserve," was the brief reply. "So I must not complain, must I?"

"I don't know," said Addie. "I like to be treated a little better than I deserve. But I don't think you ought to complain—I may congratulate you, mayn't I? I have never seen you since I heard—is it to be soon?"

"In less than a month now," he answered, with his pleasant smile.

"I saw Miss Langton at the Agricultural Show last year," said Addie. "I congratulate you with all my heart, for I thought she looked charming." Percival thanked her, with a slight inclination of his head, and a well-pleased glance. "I suppose you are going to Brackenhill now? Your errand ought to be a pleasanter one than mine."

"My errand is on a business matter, and might be pleasanter than it is." There was a touch of bitterness in his tone.

"I'm sorry," said Addie, looking at him with friendly anxiety in her eyes. "I hope it isn't anything serious."

"Serious—oh no! Did you ever read about Sinbad the Sailor?"

"A long time ago," she said, with a wondering smile.

"I'm Sinbad," said Percival calmly. "People say that everybody has a skeleton in a closet. I don't know what yours may be like —" a flash of expression passed across Addie's face—"as pleasant as a skeleton can be, I hope. Mine is the Old Man of the Sea."

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say. I'm going down now expressly to invite him to get up on my shoulders."

"Perhaps he won't," in an encouraging tone.

"Heaven help me if he doesn't!" exclaimed Percival. "What would become of me? But he will."

"Are you quite sure that you know what you really want?" Addie inquired with a smile.

"Perhaps not. And in these days of restoring and beautifying everybody's memory, I feel bound to observe that I have studied the Old Man of the Sea, and there is much to be said for him."

"Well, I hope you may enjoy carrying him more than you expect to do," said Addie. Then she hesitated, consulted her watch, looked out of the window, buttoned and unbuttoned her glove. "There was something I wanted to say to you, Percival, and I shall hardly find a better opportunity."

Sinbad was forgotten in a moment. "Say on. Is it anything you want me to do?"

"You were very good to me last year," she said. Percival disclaimed her praise with a quick movement of his hand. "If ever you should have reason to think me ungrateful, I want to say that it will not be that I have forgotten—I don't forget. It will be that I could not help myself. There is no knowing what may happen. I only thought I should like to say so."

Percival half smiled as he looked her in the face. "No knowing—I think there is some knowing. Oh, don't be frightened; it is you who know, not I. You have some reason for saying this, of course."

"Perhaps," said Addie. "But I don't know. I only wanted you to understand."

"You remind me of what I used to learn about Gunpowder Plot, long ago. 'Monteagle knew not what to think of this letter.' I feel very much like Monteagle. What is amiss, Addie—am I going to be blown up?"

"We'll hope not."

"Monteagle had no chance of asking questions, had he? But then you see he had the sagacity of his 'most dread sovereign' to fall back upon. No matter, I will not easily believe any ill of you, Addie. We have been good friends, and I think I may trust you."

"No, don't trust me. That is just it."

She was so evidently perplexed and troubled that he grew grave. "Must you talk in riddles?" he asked. "I don't like hints of something underhand and mysterious. I can't in the least imagine what you can possibly mean, or why I should ever think differently of you. But I have had a blow,—a man whom I would have trusted with everything has just turned out a swindler. He was false all the time, when I believed him most. The ugliest truth is better than that. And I don't think your truth can be very ugly, Addie. Let's have it out and make an end of it."

She shook her head. "It isn't mine; you don't know what you are asking—it isn't possible. Only some day you will think me rather mean—that's all. You trust people too much; you think everyone is as good as yourself."

"If there are not a good many better, the earth will soon want salt," said Percival. "And don't trouble yourself about my excessive trustfulness; there's some hope of my getting rid of it at this rate, isn't there?"

"I wish I could say more," sighed Addie. "But even now I am half afraid——"

"Not of me, I hope. There's no occasion, really. I shall just take my chance, and drift to the end of the chapter."

She looked almost wistfully at him, and sighed again, but said no more. The train rushed on through level fields, and softly swelling

hills, and she watched the trailing cloud of white, which, lingering as it went, caught the sunlight for a moment on its rounded masses, before they melted into the summer air. Percival was silent too. In spite of what he had said, he could not refrain from some wonder as to Addie's meaning. He thought of Horace, but what had Addie to do with Horace now? He thought of Sissy—but how could these two be sharers in a mystery? Besides he had made up his mind that the shadow in Sissy's life was cast by a mere cloud, not by any substantial fact. She was not well, she was low-spirited, she had fancies. She could not tell him, because she could not put a sense of grey oppression into words. Already she was better, and when he took her away, into new scenes, and among new people, all this vague grief and terror would be laughed at, or forgotten. It was impossible that there could be anything known to Addie Blake and Sissy which could seriously menace him. "When women get a chance of talking mysteriously, they are sure to make the most of it," thought Percival. And yet, "some day you will think me rather mean," was hardly like a romantic secret. There was a ring of prosaic certainty about such an anticipation as that. Percival was inclined to believe that, if the nut were cracked, some kernel of truth might be found, but he was not at all sure. He was quite sure that Addie believed there was such a kernel. But she might be mistaken, nor does every kernel, however carefully it may be planted and watered, necessarily produce a tree which will bear fruit. He had troubles of his own to think about just then, and felt disinclined for this nutcracking, which, if successful, would evidently get his informant into a scrape. "No—if ever I have to think her rather mean, she shall have no chance of returning the compliment," was Percival's final decision. And he felt a little glow of satisfaction as he came to it, which was all very well, for so far as it was not dictated by laziness, it was inspired by a courteous loyalty to Addie Blake. (It would be useless to go into the question of proportions.) And when he had thus heroically determined not to exert himself, he leant back and his eyes wandered over the landscape, at first with that sort of undefined pleasure and attraction which we feel when a face in the crowd recalls the face of a dear friend. Perhaps a moment later we wake to the sudden consciousness that it is our friend himself advancing to greet us. It was so with Percival. First as he gazed absently at the country round, it brought Fordborough and Brackenhill, as it were, into the background of his thoughts. A moment later he perceived that familiar landmarks were gliding past him, and that they were close to their destination.

He sprang out as soon as the train stopped, and secured a fly for Addie. "Can't say much for the horse," he remarked as he came back. "There are only three. He's an awful screw, but I don't fancy he's worse than the other two, and I rather think each of the others is."

"I haven't far to go," she said, as she swept along the platform in her queenliest fashion by his side.

"Remember me to Mrs. Blake and your sister when you write," said Percival. She flashed a swift glance at him. "I will—good-bye." He lifted his hat, and she was gone.

"Queer I should have met her after my talk with Godfrey yesterday," thought he. "She's handsomer than ever—I wonder if she ever cared for poor Horace. Why, she never so much as asked after him! Can't have cared very much—and yet I don't know. There is *no* knowing about such things." And shrugging his shoulders he dismissed the matter from his thoughts, and went to the White Hart to get a dog-cart to take him to Brackenhill.

A quarter of an hour later he was on his way. The soft air, the bright sunlight, the varying lights and shadows, the merry singing of the birds, the first wild roses in the hedgerows—he noted them all as he sped along the pleasant road. But his eyes were sombre, and the line was deeper between his brows. He had laughed about his errand to Addie Blake, but you may get laughter out of that which yields neither hope nor comfort. Laughter often goes well with bitterness, and Percival's soul was very bitter that day, as he thought of the errand on which he had come.

If there was one thing he prized in the world, it was his independence. He knew well enough that it was something outside himself, no power or strength of his own. Training and temperament had conspired to make him as dependent as a girl, but he could defy them. "I am like a hermit crab," he had owned to himself; "uncommonly helpless unless I get hold of somebody's shell." But, after all, since his grandfather the Rector had left him a handy little shell enough, he could face the world very fairly. It might have been more spacious, no doubt. Brackenhill would have been a splendid shell, delicately tinted, and lined with pearl, and our hermit crab felt that he could have filled it successfully. That, however, could not be his without two deaths, and he refrained as far as possible from thinking of such ghastly stepping-stones.

He had feared, as has been already said, that his marriage might entail upon him a certain amount of dependence on his grandfather; but through all his anxiety, there had remained to him the certainty of that little shell of his own, into which he could retire if need were, and show his claws. He was not a homeless hermit crab, dragging himself over the sand, and so conscious of his defenceless condition, that he must accept any shell that was offered him on any terms. Sissy, by an accident of inheritance, was more splendidly housed, and together they could resist all the power of Brackenhill—a fact which took away the desire to do so. While he was assured of the necessities of life, Percival could accept or refuse its luxuries as he pleased, and he had been treated as if he conferred a favour when he consented to take them. He felt sure he could do without the luxuries at a moment's notice, and that he could compel himself to live within a much narrower income than he possessed. For though he dearly loved his ease, he was clear-headed and accurate in

money matters, and if he lacked energy, he had considerable powers of passive endurance. But if he were robbed of the necessities of life—was there ever a hermit crab who could *make* himself a shell?

Yet, in spite of all his troubles, he was conscious of an increasing pleasure as he drew near to the old manor-house. Percival had never owned to mortal being the passion he had for Brackenhill, a passion which had grown up in opposition to his will. Every stone of its walls, every bough of its trees, was dear to him. He had gone there first with the intention of scorning it, and of showing his grandfather that he scorned it. In the latter he had so thoroughly succeeded, at first in sincerity, and later through his unconquerable reserve, that the old man believed that this most treasured possession was worth but little in his favourite's eyes. It grieved him. He always felt powerless with Percival, just where he most desired to play the part of a good genius. It was his own fault, he would say to himself. He had exiled Alfred and his son, and the boy had grown up an outsider, apart from all the associations which should have been woven into his life—a Percival, and not a Thorne—rather with feelings of bitterness against the Thornes. He had done it himself, and the retribution was just. Percival had said when first he saw his father's home that he "liked looking at old houses." That was all that Brackenhill was to him. The words were graven on the Squire's memory and no syllable had been uttered which would in the slightest degree efface them. It was the deepest longing of the old man's heart that Percival might reign after him, and even if it could be, his happiness would not be complete since his boy despised Brackenhill. "Any other old house would do as well," Godfrey Thorne would say with a sigh. "Perhaps he'd sell the place if he had it, and buy another somewhere else. Only Sissy cares for it."

If anyone had come to the Squire, and told him that his grandson cared more for the old house than he did himself, he would have answered with a sad little smile of utter unbelief; yet it would have been true. Brackenhill was the background of all Percival's daydreams. He loved the terrace-walk, with its balustrade; the flight of steps, with mossy balls of stone on either hand; the entrance hall, with its stately pavement of white and black; the great staircase, down which Sissy came with light footfalls and shining eyes. Above all, he loved the long drawing-room, with its antique furniture and its lingering perfume of the roses of years gone by.

Not even to Sissy had a syllable of this passion been breathed. Percival's *role* from the first had been to accept the fact that his father was disinherited as a simple matter of course, not as a punishment inflicted, but as a bargain made. All that was lost for Sarah Percival was well lost; it was impossible to reason with her son on any other basis. He only dimly remembered her, and therefore she was a symbol of his ideal. He wore her name proudly as if it were a title. If any of the old people in the neighbourhood said, "Ah, I remember your

mother," his eyes flashed with sudden eagerness. It seemed to him that if he owned his fondness for Brackenhill, it might be thought that in his inmost heart he regretted his father's obstinacy. With his grandfather, above all, he had been reserved. He knew that the old man loved him, with such an absorbing passion as old people sometimes have for the favourites of their declining years. They are sadly conscious that they have no time to change, that everything around them is strange and new, and that if they drop the hand to which they cling, trembling, they will be left alone in the world, having lost the swift instinct by which heart finds heart in youth. Percival understood something of all this, and, after a fashion, he returned his grandfather's affection. But he knew Mr. Thorne's desire to be supreme, and actively to regulate the destinies of those he loved; and, fearing his caprices, would not give a weapon into his hand, which might be turned against the giver.

He had kept him at arm's length hitherto, but now the Old Man of the Sea was to have his turn. Sinbad went to meet him with a sombre face, which softened as he drew near his journey's end.

For he was on the bit of road which he remembered so well, level and straight. To the right, the wide meadows sloped gently down till they reached the river, and you caught the silver flash of water through the willows. To the left lay a long succession of low, rounded hills, or one long hill, for it was difficult to distinguish any particular eminences in the ever-varied undulations. And a little way up the ascent stood Brackenhill, a long, low pile of grey, warm on its southern slope, with its park, and its stately trees, and shaven lawns about it. Behind it rose the treeless and unchanging downs, tufted with gorse and bracken, grassy, sunlit, and still.

Percival felt his heart leap up, and then sink within him, as they turned in at the gate.

The Three Cities.

On the island-fringed shore of the far Asiatic East, within a geographical circle of less than sixty miles in diameter, built on almost identical soil, bathed by the same waters, canopied by the same sky, rise the Three Cities, three nationalities, three civilisations, three histories, three destinies; united in the closest juxtaposition of circumstance and site; sundered by divergence wide as the extremest limits of human mind and race. Hong Kong, Canton, Macao; three monuments respectively raised by England, China, Portugal; three embodiments of as many most dissimilar energies, distinct in their starting-point, concurrent in their course, divergent in their goal.

Not sisters, though linked together by the closest ties of mutual adoption; not strangers, though aliens in language, in institutions, in blood; not hostile, though confronting each other with the bitterest antipathy of caste; not friendly, though compelled to union by links intimate as existence itself; rivals, yet associated in common interest; associates, yet necessary, unreconciled rivals; leagued, but unloving; repellent, yet allied; essentially three, accidentally one. Three tall trees from three most different seeds, unlike in flower, in foliage, in fruit; nor unlike only but antagonistic; yet planted close side by side, expanding to the same atmosphere, nourished by the same elements, above, beneath. One of them a natural, indigenous growth; two with branches of indigenous life grafted into them, but exotic in root, in stem, in type; for, in spite of the busy, yellow-complexioned, long-haired population that swarms almost equally in the streets of all three, Canton is scarcely more Chinese throughout than Macao is truly Portuguese, and Hong Kong English.

Hong Kong, genuine offspring of British energy, and whose every feature bears the unmistakable impress of the great parent. The granite quays fringing the lake-like harbour, the tall merchant offices and cavernous warerooms beyond, the solidly-constructed buildings, where artistic taste and architectural beauty are not, but comfort, usefulness, and stability are, climbing tier over tier far up the steep hillside, that hill mere barren rock scarce forty years since; the skilful windings of the flood-defying roads, triumphantly secure amid precipices down which a goat might look with justified diffidence; the dense, often exotic, foliage of the tree-planted gardens, frequent among the trim dwellings, the costly public buildings and huge works of associated enterprise, reaching from

the wharves and docks below to the white signal-station and flagstaff that crown the granite peak nigh two thousand feet in perpendicular height above: these are—and whose else could they be?—the marks of England, the impress of her seal, the bold firm lines to be stamped on earth's face by her, and by her alone.

Not a character of those in which England writes herself on the world's great page but is here plainly legible. Her liberal welcome is seen in the countless sails of all merchant-flags, European, Asiatic, American, Australasian, native, foreign, dragon-bannered, crossed, three-coloured, striped, chequered, starred, ship and steamer of every size, every construction, every colour, not scattered over, but literally covering, concealing, the still harbour-waters. Seen too is her watchfulness—may it never fail her!—over her own rights and over the rights of those she shelters—may these too never be forgotten or lightly discarded amid the giddiness of fanatical clamour and the calculated bigotry of party!—in the cruisers, the gun-boats, the war-ships and their disciplined crews, the white flag and the black metal, the protection and menace of the seas. Nor less is her mercantile supremacy feebly foreshadowed by the Tyres of antiquity, and the Genoas and Venices of later days, proclaimed in the long ranges of warehouses, piled with goods and thronged with dealers along the quay; nor her provident care of health, and that love of fresh air and the enjoyment of nature in which so few even of her European sisters share, in the broad highways, the tree-planted walks, the public gardens, the wide spaces for popular gathering and amusement, freely allotted where the sacrifice of every inch of ground means a sacrifice of golden wealth. Seen is England's imperial munificence in the size and solidity of the public buildings, the Town Hall, the Palace, the Club, the Barracks, the Hospitals; seen too is her poverty of artistic feeling in not so much the absence as the contradiction of architectural proportion and grace that characterises the exterior of almost every edifice; seen is her wise toleration of men's varied fancies in the close proximity of well-nigh every known fane, where each sect adores its own proper representative symbol of the One unknown Truth; seen too her childish toying with the puerilities of a happily dead past, in the Gothic structures that rear their incongruous pinnacles against a background of tropical rock and sky. What influence but the law-abiding rule of England could at a word call together and maintain in mutual security and orderly peace the motley, nor seldom faction-nurtured, crowd of the Hong Kong thoroughfares, with all their antipathies, their rivalries, their hereditary feuds, their daily jarrings? What even-handed justice but hers could so smooth away in the level of caste-ignoring administration every local separation of race, and abolishing the jealous distinctions, too manifest elsewhere, of assigned "wards" and "quarters," bring Asiatic and European, white, dark, and yellow, hat, turban, and braided queue, Chinese, Parsee, Briton, Portuguese, Malay, Australian—who not?—to dwell side by side in the same street, on the same level? Truly Hong

Kong is a compendium of the British Empire, as the British Empire of the world.

Every town, every village even, attentively considered, has its special characteristic, its proper epithet; the keynote of its expression, the air-tint of its landscape, the formula of its existence. Anglo-Chino-cosmopolitanism (I apologise, but a complex object demands a complex word) is the characteristic of Hong Kong. A British seaport, but on a Chinese coast, it has necessarily much of the Chinese, much of the cosmopolitan about it; its residents belonging chiefly to the former, its fluctuating population to the latter category. Were, indeed, the inhabitants of Hong Kong polled at any given moment, the English, numerically taken, would show for but a meagre figure on the list. A little leaven, yet potent not to leaven merely, but in a manner to assimilate the whole mass; a drop, but one that has diffused its own peculiar tint through all the waters, many-coloured else, of the entire pool.

Many-coloured indeed and many-formed as is the inner life of Hong Kong, its outer aspect, as we gaze on it near at hand from the harbour in front, is essentially, undeniably English. Before us, it may be, is the deep-eaved, low-fronted Chinese temple, the large barn-like Portuguese church, the Arabo-Malay mosque, the Parsee Tower of Silence; but these, and whatever other typical buildings of public or private use attest the presence of the subject or protected races, modestly elude the eye, and hide themselves unobserved among the larger constructions and symmetrical masses proper to the English colonists. Ungraceful enough many of the constructions, heavy the masses; and yet a very lovely sight is Hong Kong as a whole. Close to the sparkling water's edge, curving with the little promontories and indentations of the mountain-base, run the town houses in a long white wavy strip, much narrower in appearance when looked at thus from a somewhat lower level than it really is, while the inevitable unsightlinesses of a large and crowded city are hidden from view by the stately warehouse frontage. Next above this rises, in seemingly perpendicular steepness, a broad belt of dark and glossy green, the tree-shaded gardens, luxuriant though trim, that for five or six hundred feet upward from the sea clothe the nakedness of the old granite slopes, and almost conceal the white dwellings nestled amid the pleasing shade, where forty years since—no more—existed neither house nor tree. Higher yet, towering to the violet-blue sky, rise the giant crags, the precipitous torrent-furrowed slopes, the massive mountain ridges, here grass-clad in bright emerald, there again naked boulders tinted red or grey; there dark with brushwood and low gnarled trees adown the track of some deep-cleft ravine; and amid grass and rock gleam out countless specks of liveliest yellow, blue, purple, and red, tokens that even these comparatively barren shelves belong to the region emphatically and not undeservedly called the "Flowery Land." Clinging to the steepest slopes, like a red-tinted ribbon unrolled and let hang from mountain-crest to base, winds the well-constructed path for horse or foot from the

town below to the Peak above; other tracks, each one a triumph of engineering skill, lead right and left amid gorge and precipice to remote villages and little anchorages on the further side of the central heights. Small Swiss-like cottages, the summer retreats of Hong Kong rank or wealth, glitter in the sun among the topmost crags; and from two thousand feet above land and sea towers England's flagstaff over all.

Such is the southward view: turning from it north, west, or east, the ship-peopled harbour shows as though closed in by the fantastic forms of high yellow-streaked mountains, the Chinese mainland chain, nor less by the countless peaks and crags of innumerable islands, some large, some small, some massive, some mere reefs; a labyrinth of land and water, of rock and shining inlet, of which the centre and heart is Hong Kong. On every side fisher-hamlets, pretty enough at a distance, and dense Chinese trading-stations fringe the bay-indented coast; while here a white light-tower, there a fantastic dark outline of rocky pinnacle, breaks the larger landscape lines. Showered down over all, penetrating all, is the violet daylight known to West-Indian skies, also on the tropical verge, but nowhere so pure, so delicate, so transparent as here in Eastern Asia, along the coasts of the furthestmost, world-encircling sea.

A town built against steep hillsides, rising right from the water's edge, can hardly fail of being picturesque; and even where, owing to climate, material, soil, or local cause, the enlivenments of colour are wanting, beauty at least of outline will not be absent. Thus, for instance, Trebizond, Sanpsoon, Sinope, Cherasond, that ancient sisterhood of history and decay, dingy-tinted as they are, and overshadowed besides by the murky Black Sea atmosphere, yet attract the eye by the grandeur of their outlines and position; dank dark ruins with broad spread lines of dense forest and cloud-veiled mountains for their background, they suit well with the gloomy waters of the Euxine below. But in the bright tropical and in the yet brighter sub-tropical zone, grandeur, even where most present, is in a manner hidden under the exceeding charms of colour and light. From the countless towns and villages, each lovely to gaze on from the deck of the by-sailing yacht, of the Mediterranean coast, on to West-Indian latitudes and Brazilian shores, seaports present an almost monotonous beauty; every voyager has the tale by heart. A known example, and one to which Hong Kong in some of its features offers a certain resemblance, is the much-visited port of St. Thomas in the West Indies; the first appearance and general outline of each have, to him who sees them entering either bay, a great deal in common. But the difference is in truth more than the likeness. For while the stateliness of its buildings and the verdure of its surroundings are what most distinguish Hong Kong, St. Thomas, though to the imaginative view of a Kingsley bosomed in orange-groves, displays in truth neither orange-groves nor any others round and amid its white dwellings to the average human eye, which ranges instead over a brown expanse of stunted "bush;" while the smallness of its dwelling-places gives the town some-

what of the appearance of a children's toy-box turned out at random adown the hills; the hills themselves, too, are wanting in height, and commonplace in outline. What, however, St. Thomas lacks Hong Kong possesses, offering to view just the right combination of brightness, tint, and colour, along with solidity, dignity, and size, in the perfected proportionateness of all.

Again, "from the sea, charming, on shore, detestable," is the often-repeated verdict of the British voyager who first visits some Levantine Jaffa or Brazilian Rio; and, all due allowance made for British fastidiousness, there is only too often in the untidiness of a sub-tropical seaport interior wherewithal to justify the sentence. But it does not apply to Hong Kong. The town-streets, the principal thoroughfares at any rate, are broad and clean; the tree-shaded roads that wind among the gardens and residences higher up are of park-like trimness; nothing neglected, nothing dilapidated, offends the view. No quality, in fact, commends itself so much to the pleased visitor, especially if recent from the slovenly, tumble-down, patched-up cities too common in less favoured spots of the Asiatic tropics, than the neatness, the spruceness, the completeness of Hong Kong; all praiseworthy qualities, but especially the last, considering the frequent, and indeed, as it here happens, by no means remote, ravages of tempest and flood in this cyclone-swept region.

Towns, like men, age quickly in the tropics; and thirty years, though of little account for the change they bring in temperate Europe, are in Indo-Chinese latitudes more than enough, unless constant attention and repair prevent, to confer an air of decrepitude and decay on buildings no less than on the builders. But no blotched and crevassed wall, no bush-grown ruin, no broken pavement, no grass-mantled court, announces the decrepitude of Hong Kong; energy, not the unsteady, often misdirected, energy of a colony's first youth, but the enduring judicious energy of vigorous manhood, is her very type, her characteristic, her keynote, not less so than art of Florence, enjoyment of Vienna, majesty of Rome.

Energy is but another name for life; and of human life scarcely any of its Old World varieties, and not many from among those of the New, are absent from Hong Kong. The predominant ones, of course, are the English and the Chinese. Of the latter, though, numerically taken, the most abundant, and, next to the English, the most influential in the colony, little need here be said; we shall have a much better opportunity of studying it in its native home, in Canton, where it attains its complete development. But, be it much or be it little in quantity and importance, essentially it is the same everywhere; of all nations in the world, the Jews themselves not excepted, the Chinese, while the readiest to expatriate themselves, are the least modified by expatriation. How many ages of climatic and local influences, how many generations traversed under foreign rule, amid foreign institutions, might by the slow operation of natural selection, struggle for life, survival of the fittest,

and so forth, suffice to bring them into somewhat of even approximate conformity with the dominant races among which they settle, in California say, in Queensland, in the streets of Calcutta or the woods of Borneo, Darwin himself might, in the absence of so much as a hint, let alone a fact, to guide him, be puzzled to conjecture. But here, on their own soil, in daily intercourse with their fellow-countrymen of the great Empire, the Celestials are doubly proof against all influences of change. And hence the Chinese denizens of Hong Kong differ little or nothing, outwardly or inwardly, in dress, customs, or ideas, from their brethren of similar rank or occupation at Canton. When arrived there we may study them at our leisure. Enough for the present to say that in British Hong Kong the Chinese Club, known from the profession of its first founders as that of the "compradores" or "middle-men," their Hospital, worthy in its orderly neatness and studious care to rank with many English hospitals, or even German, their large theatre, their quaint temples, and the other results of their combined and communal action, exhibit Chinese munificence, good taste, and methodical accuracy in a most favourable light.

As it is with the Chinese, so it is, after a manner, with the English. An Englishman self-exiled to the tropics dons a solar hat fearful and wonderful to behold, patronises light flannels, and occasionally white shoes, doubles and trebles his already frequent national ablutions, and even at times dines, greatly daring, in a white jacket. More yet, he may, when absolutely compelled thereto by the fitness of things, exchange his favourite mode of locomotion, pedestrian or equestrian, for others peculiar to the land of his adoption, may recline in an Indian palanquin, or, as here in China, take seat in the uncomfortable sedan-chair. Never surely was a contrivance so thoroughly adapted for making, in appearance at least, slaves of your fellow-creatures and an invalid of yourself; and yet to invent anything else equally well suited to the precipitous inclines of Hong Kong, or the narrow lanes of a Chinese city, would, all agree, be a task beyond the inventive genius of man born of woman. But to return to our Englishman. Despite the modifications just indicated in his outer self, he is yet, for all essential characteristics, the same identical man who rode to hounds in the county, or sat on a high stool at a City desk, who dined in a dress-coat at a quarter past eight, and went, mayhap, in a cylinder hat to church on the Sabbath morn; unchanged, unchangeable as Byron's ocean, or Shakspeare's "northern star." For the rest, his works declare him; by these he is best known; and of these, as here displayed on the furthest Eastern marge, I have spoken, cursorily indeed, yet I think sufficiently already.

Next in local importance and mercantile wealth to the British community ranks the German; that nationality destined, it would seem, to become in no distant future our rival on equal terms, perhaps even our supplanter in the world's commerce. Like the English on the one hand, and the Chinese on the other, the Germans have their own social centre,

their own club, and, I believe, their own appropriate place of worship; a thriving, thrifty race. Like Englishmen, too, a hundred and more degrees of longitude or latitude make little difference in Germans; not indeed so absolutely unplastic as ourselves, yet slow to adopt the usages of others, reluctant to modify their own.

The Portuguese, rarely of genuine European origin, mostly of mixed or Asiatic strain, are as much superior in numbers as inferior in weight to the English. A few merchants lead the van of the Lusitanian host; its bulk is a "mixed multitude" of clerks, accountants, writers, apothecaries, and the like. Intelligent, good-natured, sociable, but with somewhat of Reuben's doom upon them, they lack the backbone of the Teutonic—I use the word with becoming diffidence—races, and the elastic energy of the genuine Celt. But their minuter delineation is best reserved for a survey of their neighbouring head-quarters, Macao. To complete the European, or quasi-European, catalogue, come a few French, Italians, Spaniards, and Manilese; some Danes also. These last excepted, those now briefly catalogued form the bulk of the Catholic population, which includes a small number of the Chinese themselves; and is supplemented by a whole army of clergy, regular and secular, congregationists, nuns, and missionaries of various orders and robes; all, like their Protestant rivals, who are also numerous in the field, intent on the well-meant but infructuous task of pouring very new wine into very old bottles—task which for three centuries and more baffled the skill of the old-society Jesuits themselves, though masters the like of whom the world has never seen of the soul-winning craft, and with a Xavier or a Ricci at their head. Where such have failed who can hope success? However, the small result which yet attends missionary efforts, and sustains the labourers in an ungrateful vineyard by the ever-delusive hope of greater things and a more abundant vintage to come, here falls, as at Singapore, and indeed elsewhere generally, to the share of the Catholic apostles rather than the Protestant; a circumstance the reasons of which are sufficiently well known to all.

Jews, at least those distinctively such, are few at Hong Kong; nor, indeed, as I am told, do they dwell numerously in any of the tents of the Celestial Empire, whether those tents belong, as is commonly supposed, to the Japhetic camp or not. Jacob and Laban together would not, if the truth be told, make much out of a contract with a Chinaman. But the "highly respectable" Parsee in his quasi-episcopal garb, the turbaned Arabo-Malay trader, the dusky Hindoo, the energetic Japanese, and many other Asiatic types of less note have their representatives here. Towering amid all, the grim Sikhs from amongst whom the strong and well-organised police force of the place is mostly recruited, slowly stalk past in moustached majesty, offering the completest contrast that fancy could devise to the sleek, smooth-faced, smiling, briskly-moving Chinese.

Such is Hong Kong; a picture chequered to minuteness in detail, uniform in general colouring, and that colouring English. Examined,

however, more closely, and with the eye of a resident rather than of a traveller, a further characteristic, hardly perceptible indeed on the surface, but existent immediately below it, and extending downwards to the lowermost layers of colonial life, comes to view. It is the deep demarcation line that sunders the entire community into two parts, a line not less real because at first sight unapparent, a gulf all the more impassable because not dug by law and ordinance, but by custom and instinct. On the one side of this social gulf are the English, with a few, by no means the majority, of their European compeers; on the other almost all those included in the general designation of "foreigners"; but especially the Asio-Portuguese and the Chinese natives of the land. Years of a common home, common pursuits, common interests, have not for social intimacy and domestic intercourse, hardly even for mutual knowledge of each other's characters, habits, and modes of thought, brought the Briton and the Chinaman one step nearer to each other than they were when the flag of British sovereignty first waved over the island thirty-five years ago. Between English and other nationalities the division is not quite so rigorous, yet the barrier-fence exists, and as yet gives no sign of weakening at any point. Something of the kind may be observed in many other British colonies of the Old World and of the New; but in none, I believe, is exclusiveness carried so far as in Hong Kong, where circumstances, many of them beyond the control of the colonists themselves, have promoted, and in a manner rendered inevitable, a condition not otherwise wholly uncongenial to the British mind. There is something to be said in its favour, something also in blame.

Within, however, its comparatively narrow limits, necessary or self-imposed, Hong Kong society—the English section of it, I mean—is remarkable for its cordial geniality, and liveliness tempered by refinement and education. Many are the British colonies, if settlements be not the correcter title, deservedly commended for similar qualities in the far East; but in none, so at least I am told, can the National Club boast a better reading-room and library than those at Hong Kong; no Public Hall show choicer diversions, gayer dances, or sprightlier amateur performances; no race-course is the scene of better contested emulation, no tennis-lawns more frequented, no saloons brighter than hers. Without depreciation of her half-sisters, let England's eldest-born daughter in the Celestial Empire have her due.

A goodly city, a goodly colony, this Hong Kong of the present. But the forward-stretching link of real, surely, yet undefined significance that will not let us rest in acquiescent stability on the firm ground of what is, because dragging us ever on to the uncertain cloud-land of what is to be, compels us even here to lift up our eyes beyond the pleasing Hong Kong of the day to the possible Hong Kong of coming years in the foreshadowed destinies of Asio-British dominion.

Commanding as it does the main entry, the portal of the South Chinese Empire, and through it of the central provinces and inner sanctuary

of the ancient shrine, as strong in position as secure in sheltered anchorage, alike easy of access to friends, and difficult of approach, if not impossible, to foes, Hong Kong can then only lose its nature-ensured importance when the power that now grasps it loses its own. Till then—a far distant day—it is the easternmost extremity of the mighty imperial lever, reaching from the far European West to the Chinese shore, and ever ready to move, it might be absolutely to overturn, the entire Middle Kingdom. Such it already is in English eyes, more so in the wakeful eyes of Continental jealousy: what then in the eyes of the Chinese themselves?

Very different indeed from the aspect of things to the fevered speculator of irritable Europe is that they assume in the quiet common-sense gaze of the placid Chinese. Nothing, in European estimate, irritates national antipathies more than territorial occupation; it is a thorn that, abiding in the wound, keeps it ever festering; a centre-point round which gathers every worst feeling of contempt in the stronger power, hatred and desire of revenge in the weaker, aversion in both. Two centuries have not reconciled Spain to our presence in Gibraltar; the hostility of the Arabs is not less bitter now than forty years ago to the French settlers of Algiers; Ceuta maintains the Moorish and Christian feud; could any Englishman endure for an instant the bare thought of a foreign flag, whatever its nationality, floating over the Portland heights? We occupy Hong Kong, a few hours distant, no more, from one of the greatest, the most important, the most national of Chinese cities; and the Chinese look on with not a frown on their smooth faces, not a thought but of quiet accommodation to circumstances, with a feeling not practically distinguishable from great indifference. Within the narrow but densely-peopled island, without it, along the village-fringed shores that stretch back to the wharves of Whampoa and the gates of Canton, the Chinese population shows itself, all due allowance made for the prejudices of mutual ignorance and difference of blood, friendly, kindly even, to the English—their first frays over, the Chinese dragon has no further misliking for St. George; rather seeks amicably to share with the stranger champion the favours of the Golden Princess and the treasures of her store.

Nations may, though rarely, be friends, their officials hardly or never; and it would be a millennium, or rather a very Utopia on earth, did no grudges, no complaints, no grievances exist between Chinese Hoppos and British harbour-masters, the retinue of the yellow flag and that of the Union Jack. Yet, considering the war of 1842, and the storming of Canton, with all that preceded and followed it, in 1857, remembering what passed at Tien-tsin in 1858, and what at Peking in 1860, all recent dates, and, the first alone in a measure excepted, belonging to the living generation rather than the past, we must admit that the Chinese mind would have been justified in entertaining a far greater degree of alienation from us than exists at the present day. And if to these we add the

daily bickerings kept up—with how much of blame on the one side, how much on the other, is not here the place to inquire—of the smuggling trade; the shocks, of little consequence perhaps in themselves, but irritating from their frequency, between Chinese formalism and British roughhandedness, the vagaries of tourists, the intrusive bigotry of missionaries; and last, not least, the easily-made confusion in Chinese apprehension between English and other less law-abiding nationalities, European or New World, our wonder at Chinese tolerance, even good nature, even courtesy, may well increase to admiration. True that a diversity of ideas, of customs, wide enough to make the one race at first sight the seeming antipodes of the other, separates the Briton and the Chinaman; nor can we wish it done away. Little, indeed, does a nation gain—much, incalculably much, does it ever lose—by abandoning its ways for the ways of the alien, its usages for his usages, its fashions for his fashions, its gods for his gods. History in this, through all her pages, reads us only one lesson, and its latest illustration is no further from China than is Japan. But the fusion of mutual advantage, of good feeling, and of kindly intercourse is not less possible than beneficial; the more so that the glaring but superficial unlikeness between the British and the Chinese types covers much of deeply-seated real resemblance, nay, in some regards, identity of character. And in this fusion it is for us, the uninvited intruders on Chinese territory, to lead the way. Manchester goods and opium are excellent things of their kind, but honour, justice, good faith, and good government are more; of these, unless England be indeed untrue to her imagined self, we have plenty and to spare; these too we can in our measure communicate by a policy not wholly summed up in "*Vas victis*" and "Gunboats to the fore."

And of this wider policy what better basis could be found than in the British city that guards the entry of Southern China, the friendly though foreign Piræus of Canton? "Hong Kong for the merchants" has long been the colonial motto, and though, if taken absolutely, a narrow one, I would not say that at the outset it may not have been adequate to the requirements of the day. But its time has gone by, or rather it has been, in its complete meaning, transferred to Shanghai and the busy Free Ports, situated indeed on Chinese soil, but dedicated by British protection to trade, and trade alone. This is their one obligation: well they fulfil it, and with it they may be content. But on our own national soil, within our own waters, "Hong Kong for the Empire" should now be our device. Elsewhere, even more abundantly than here, we have mercantile relations, mercantile interchange, mercantile duties, with China; why not, here at least, Imperial also? Why should not the "Flowery Land" be to us, in due process of time, not merely a market for our goods, but a recruiting ground for our nationality, for our armies, our navies, our enterprise, our manifold life? Wide range for our imperial growth; and its starting point, so we know its true bearing, is already made, is no other than Hong Kong. Born on British

ground, or preferring it by exchange of permanent residence to their own, what hinders the extension of British national rights, the equalisation of British law, the privileges of British citizenship to the Chinese indwellers of the colony? Better surely subjects than aliens, union than division. Is England too weak a mother to nurse other children than those of her own island-womb? Are her means too restricted to adopt? Do the cords of her tent admit of no lengthening? Can her heart only fear, nor be enlarged to the gathering of the abundance of the sea? Idle fear! Unison of sympathy, of feeling, of thought, of purpose will follow close on unity of national existence; and Hong Kong may—we have but to will it—prove the first link in the golden band to bind in one the vastest energies of the East and of the West, China and England.

By such policy did ancient Rome consolidate that Empire which for five hundred years summed up the world in one citizenship, one name; this is

The Seal of that most firm assurance

Which bars the pit over destruction's strength.

More than inheritor of Rome's Empire, Prometheus of the age, England touches that Seal already by her world-wide colonies; why not grasp it, and make it her own?

Such is the youngest-born of the three sister-rivals, emblem of progressive energy, of expansive strength. Elder by uncounted centuries, her birth-date lost in the mists of fable, Canton is not less emblem also of strength, but more of stability, of energy, but energy linked to repose.

There are cities that once desolated have never risen again; there are others that ravaged not once but often ever renew their interrupted life, changed, it may be, somewhat in outward style, essentially the same. Babylon, Palmyra, Aventicum, are examples of the former; of the latter Damascus, Rome, Canton; hill-bandit, Tartar, French, English, each in turn has wasted land and town with sword and fire; to-day you pass through the gaily-decorated streets, amid smiling peace, prosperity, abundance, and, unless taught from history, would never guess the ruin and horrors of scarce twenty years since. Hong Kong may fade, as Macao has already faded; not so Canton; her roots are those of the great Empire itself, her life its life—a life that has outlasted the birth, increase, decline, death of countless kingdoms, and may well yet outlast countless more.

Of Canton then, and of that third city, once a vigorous growth, now a withered memory, yet beautiful in decay, fallen Macao, there would be much to say; but time and circumstance, the boundary-marks of our little day, have traced me too narrow a line to admit of its enclosing, even in miniature, the vast dimensions of history, description, and thought that open out with the gateways of the Middle Kingdom, the Celestial Empire. But he who would realise, by analogy at least, what Egypt was in her earlier better days, before Hyksos or Persian, Greek or

Roman, Arab or Turk, had dwarfed her down to the measure of their own lesser stature, let him visit Canton. Even there, and without pursuing his path further into the wonders outstretched for thousands of leagues beyond, throughout the vastest as the most enduring of earth's kingdoms, he may form a not inadequate idea of the entire Empire, as he who has seen the pylons of the RhameSSION or Edfou, and them only, may judge, nor hesitatingly, what were the glories of the Nile-Pharaohs, and what the greatness of their sway. Further investigation may complete the details, but will not add much to the proportions of the first view.

Let him visit Canton. There he may study the results of a government based on reverence, on literature, on guarded rank, on respected age; of a priesthood kept within its proper limits of ceremonial observances and national rites, nor permitted to arrogate blasphemous dictation to the minds and souls of men; of administrative wisdom, wisely limiting itself to the good order, sufficiency, and happiness of man's actual life, without pretension or preoccupation for what may come after. There too he may see, what in Europe he will hardly see, in America never, how well it is with a nation that knows when it is well off, and knowing this prefers to enjoy in quiet the steady if not brilliant light of its own tried and hereditary lamp, to running after bright wills-of-the-wisp, delusive imitations, fancied progress, hoped improvement, and all the promise-phantoms of a restless vision. What particular "fifty years of Europe" those may be that the poet of our age pronounces "better than a cycle of Cathay" I know not; but should hardly fancy he intended the quinquagesimal that includes the Commune of 1871, or that of the chaos of 1793, any more than those lighted up by the hell-fires of the Inquisition, or the blood-stained days of the barons, first or last. Doubtless there is much that China might advantageously learn from Europe; but Europe too, unquiet, disintegrating Europe, might with at least equal advantage to herself take more than one lesson from Cathay. In Canton, in China, there are many wonders for the tourist; there are hints for the statesman also.

W. G. PALGRAVE.

Fornovo.

IN the town of Parma there is one surpassingly strange relic of the past. The palace of the Farnesi, like many a haunt of upstart tyranny and beggared pride on these Italian plains, rises unfinished and disconsolate above the stream that bears the city's name. The squalor of this grey-brown edifice of formless brick, left naked like the palace of the same Farnesi at Piacenza, has something even horrid in it now that only vague memory survives of its former uses. The princely *sprezzatura* of its ancient occupants, careless of these unfinished courts and unroofed galleries amid the splendour of their purpled silks and the glitter of their torchlight pageantry, has yielded to sullen cynicism—the cynicism of arrested ruin and unreverend age. All that was satisfying to the senses and distracting to the eyesight in their transitory pomp has passed away, leaving a sinister and naked shell. Remembrance can but summon up the crimes, the madness, the trivialities of those dead palace-builders. An atmosphere of evil clings to the dilapidated walls, as though the tainted spirit of the infamous Pier Luigi still possessed the spot, on which his toadstool brood of princelings sprouted in the mud of their misdeeds. Enclosed in this huge labyrinth of brickwork is the relic of which I spoke. It is the once world-famous Teatro Farnese, raised in the year 1618 by Ranunzio Farnese for the marriage of Odoardo Farnese with Margaret of Austria. Giambattista Aleotti, a native of pageant-loving Ferrara, traced the stately curves and noble orders of the galleries, designed the columns that support the raftered roof, marked out the orchestra, arranged the stage, and breathed into the whole the spirit of Palladio's most heroic neo-Latin style. Vast, built of wood, dishevelled, with broken statues and blurred coats of arms, with its empty scene, its uncurling frescoes, its hangings all in rags, its cobwebs of two centuries, its dust and mildew and discoloured gold—this theatre, a sham in its best days, and now that ugliest of things, a sham unmasked and naked to the light of day, is yet sublime, because of its proportioned harmony, because of its grand Roman manner. The sight and feeling of it fasten upon the mind and abide in the memory like a nightmare,—like one of Piranesi's weirdest and most passion-haunted etchings for the *Carceri*. Idling there at noon in the twilight of the dust-bedarkened windows, we fill the tiers of those high galleries with ladies, the space below with grooms and pages; the stage is ablaze with torches, and an Italian Masque, such as our Marlowe dreamed of, fills the scene. But it is impossible to dower these fancies with even such life as in healthier

happier ruins phantasy may lend to imagination's figments. This theatre is like a maniac's skull, empty of all but unrealities and mockeries of things that are. The ghosts we raise here could never have been living men and women: *questi sciaurati non fur mai vivi*. So clinging is the sense of instability that appertains to every fragment of that dry-rot tyranny which seized by evil fortune in the sunset of her golden day on Italy.

In this theatre I mused one morning after visiting Fornovo; and the thoughts suggested by the battlefield found their proper atmosphere in the dilapidated place. What, indeed, is the Teatro Farnese but a symbol of those hollow principalities which the despot and the stranger built in Italy after the fatal date of 1494, when national enthusiasm and political energy were expiring in a blaze of art, and when the Italians as a people had ceased to be; but when the phantom of their former life, surviving in high works of beauty, was still superb by reason of imperishable style? How much in Italy of the Renaissance was, like this plank-built plastered theatre, a glorious sham? The sham was seen through then; and now it stands unmasked: and yet, strange to say, so perfect is its form that we respect the sham and yield our spirits to the incantation of its music!

The battle of Fornovo, as modern battles go, was a paltry affair; and even at the time it seemed sufficiently without result. Yet the trumpets which rang on July 6, 1495, for the onset, sounded the *reveille* of the modern world; and in the inconclusive termination of the struggle of that day, the Italians were already judged and sentenced as a nation. The armies who met that morning represented Italy and France,—Italy, the Sibyl of Renaissance; France, the Sibyl of Revolution. At the fall of evening Europe was already looking northward; and the last years of the fifteenth century were opening an act which closed in blood at Paris on the ending of the eighteenth.

If it were not for thoughts like these, no one, I suppose, would take the trouble to drive for two hours out of Parma to the little village of Fornovo,—a score of bare grey hovels on the margin of a pebbly river-bed beneath the Apennines. The fields on either side, as far as eye can see, are beautiful indeed in May sunlight, painted here with flax, like shallow sheets of water reflecting a pale sky, and there with clover red as blood. Scarce unfolded leaves sparkle like flamelets of bright green upon the knotted vines, and the young corn is bending all one way beneath a western breeze. But not less beautiful than this is the whole broad plain of Lombardy; nor are the nightingales louder here than in the acacia trees around Pavia. As we drive, the fields become less fertile, and the hills encroach upon the level, sending down their spurs upon that waveless plain like blunt rocks jutting out into a tranquil sea. When we reach the bed of the Taro, these hills begin to narrow on either hand, and the road rises. Soon they open out again with gradual curving lines, forming a kind of amphitheatre filled up from

flank to flank with the *ghiara* or pebbly bottom of the Taro. The Taro is not less wasteful than any other of the brotherhood of streams that pour from Alp or Apennine to swell the Po. It wanders, an impatient rivulet, through a wilderness of shingles, uncertain of its aim, shifting its course with the season of the year, unless the jaws of some deep-cloven gully hold it tight and show how insignificant it is. As we advance, the hills approach again; between their skirts there is nothing but the river bed; and now on rising ground above the stream, at the point of juncture between the Ceno and the Taro, we find Fornovo. Beyond the village the valley broadens out once more, disclosing Apennines capped with winter snow. On the right descends the Ceno. On the left foams the Taro, following whose rocky channel we should come at last to Pontremoli and the Tyrrhenian sea beside Sarzana. On a May-day of sunshine like the present, the Taro is a gentle stream. A waggon drawn by two white oxen has just entered its channel, guided by a contadino with goat-skin leggings, wielding a long goad. The patient creatures stem the water, which rises to the peasant's thighs and ripples round the creaking wheels. Swaying to and fro, as the shingles shift upon the river-bed, they make their way across; and now they have emerged upon the stones; and now we lose them in a flood of sunlight.

It was by this pass that Charles VIII. in 1495 returned from Tuscany, when the army of the League was drawn up waiting to intercept and crush him in the mousetrap of Fornovo. No road remained for Charles and his troops but the shingly bed of the Taro, running, as I have described it, between the spurs of steep hills. It is true that the valley of the Baganza leads, from a little higher up among the mountains, into Lombardy. But this pass runs straight to Parma; and to follow it would have brought the French upon the walls of a strong city. Charles could not do otherwise than descend upon the village of Fornovo, and cut his way thence in the teeth of the Italian army over stream and pebble between the gorges of throttling mountains. The failure of the Italians to achieve what here upon the ground appears so simple, delivered Italy hand-bound to strangers. Had they but succeeded in arresting Charles and destroying his forces at Fornovo, it is just possible that then—even then, at the eleventh hour—Italy might have gained the sense of national coherence, or at least have proved herself capable of holding by her leagues the foreigner at bay. As it was, the battle of Fornovo, in spite of Venetian bonfires and Mantuan Madonnas of Victory, made her conscious of incompetence and convicted her of cowardice. After Fornovo, her sons scarcely dared to hold their heads up in the field against invaders; and the battles fought upon her soil were duels among aliens for the prize of Italy.

In order to comprehend the battle of Fornovo in its bearings on Italian history, we must go back to the year 1492, and understand the conditions of the various states of Italy at that date. On April 8 in that year, Lorenzo de' Medici, who had succeeded in maintaining a

political equilibrium in the peninsula, expired, and was succeeded by his son Piero, a vain and foolhardy young man, from whom no guidance could be expected. On July 25, Innocent VIII. died, and was succeeded by the very worst Pope who has ever occupied St. Peter's chair, Roderigo Borgia, Alexander VI. It was felt at once that the old order of things had somehow ended, and that a new era, the destinies of which as yet remained incalculable, was opening for Italy. The chief Italian powers, hitherto kept in equipoise by the diplomacy of Lorenzo de' Medici, were these—the Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Florence, the Papacy, and the Kingdom of Naples. Minor states, such as the Republics of Genoa and Siena, the Duchies of Urbino and Ferrara, the Marquisate of Mantua, the petty tyrannies of Romagna, and the wealthy city of Bologna, were sufficiently important to affect the balance of power, and to produce new combinations. For the present purpose it is, however, enough to consider the five great Powers.

After the peace of Constance, which freed the Lombard Communes from Imperial interference in the year 1183, Milan, by her geographical position, rose rapidly to be the first city of North Italy. Without narrating the changes by which she lost her freedom as a Commune, it is enough to state that, earliest of all Italian cities, Milan passed into the hands of a single family. The Visconti managed to convert this flourishing commonwealth, with all its dependencies, into their private property, ruling it exclusively for their own profit, using its municipal institutions as the machinery of administration, and employing the taxes which they raised upon its wealth for purely selfish ends. When the line of the Visconti ended in the year 1447, their tyranny was continued by Francesco Sforza, the bastard son of a poor soldier of adventure, who had raised himself by his military genius, and had married Bianca, the illegitimate daughter of the last Visconti. On the death of Francesco Sforza in 1466, he left two sons, Galeazzo Maria and Lodovico, surnamed Il Moro, both of whom were destined to play a prominent part in history. Galeazzo Maria, dissolute, vicious, and cruel to the core, was murdered by his injured subjects in the year 1476. His son, Giovanni Galeazzo, aged eight, would in course of time have succeeded to the Duchy, had it not been for the ambition of his uncle Lodovico. Lodovico succeeded in naming himself as Regent for his nephew, whom he kept, long after he had come of age, in a kind of honourable prison. Virtual master in Milan, but without a legal title to the throne, unrecognised in his authority by the Italian powers, and holding it from day to day by craft and fraud, Lodovico at last found his situation untenable; and it was this difficulty of an usurper to maintain himself in his despotism which, as we shall see, brought the French into Italy.

Venice, the neighbour and constant foe of Milan, had become a close oligarchy by a process of gradual constitutional development, which threw her government into the hands of a few nobles. She was practically ruled by the hereditary members of the Grand Council. Ever

since the year 1453, when Constantinople fell beneath the Turk, the Venetians had been more and more straitened in their Oriental commerce, and were thrown back upon the policy of territorial aggrandisement in Italy, from which they had hitherto refrained as alien to the temperament of the Republic. At the end of the fifteenth century Venice therefore became an object of envy and terror to the Italian States. They envied her because she alone was tranquil, wealthy, powerful, and free. They feared her because they had good reason to suspect her of encroachment; and it was foreseen that if she got the upper hand in Italy, all Italy would be the property of the families inscribed upon the Golden Book. It was thus alone that the Italians comprehended government. The principle of representation being utterly unknown, and the privileged burghers in each city being regarded as absolute and lawful owners of the city and of everything belonging to it, the conquest of a town by a republic implied the political extinction of that town and the disfranchisement of its inhabitants in favour of the conquerors.

Florence at this epoch still called itself a Republic; and of all Italian commonwealths it was by far the most democratic. Its history, unlike that of Venice, had been the history of continual and brusque changes, resulting in the destruction of the old nobility, in the equalisation of the burghers, and in the formation of a new aristocracy of wealth. From this class of *bourgeois* nobles sprang the Medici, who, by careful manipulation of the State machinery, by the creation of a powerful party devoted to their interests, by flattery of the people, by corruption, by taxation, and by constant scheming, raised themselves to the first place in the commonwealth, and became its virtual masters. In the year 1492, Lorenzo de' Medici, the most remarkable chief of this despotic family, died, bequeathing his supremacy in the Republic to a son of marked incompetence.

Since the Pontificate of Nicholas V. the See of Rome had entered upon a new period of existence. The Popes no longer dreaded to reside in Rome, but were bent upon making the metropolis of Christendom both splendid as a seat of art and learning, and also potent as the capital of a secular kingdom. Though their fiefs in Romagna and the March were still held but loosely, though their provinces swarmed with petty despots who defied the Papal authority, and though the princely Roman houses of Colonna and Orsini were still strong enough to terrorise the Holy Father in the Vatican, it was now clear that the Papal See must in the end get the better of its adversaries, and consolidate itself into a first-rate power. The internal spirit of the Papacy at this time corresponded to its external policy. It was thoroughly secularised by a series of worldly and vicious pontiffs, who had clean forgotten what their title, Vicar of Christ, implied. They consistently used their religious prestige to enforce their secular authority, while by their temporal power they caused their religious claims to be respected. Corrupt and shame-

less, they indulged themselves in every vice, openly acknowledged their children, and turned Italy upside down in order to establish favourites and bastards in the principalities they seized as spoils of war.

The kingdom of Naples differed from any other state of Italy. Subject continually to foreign rulers since the decay of the Greek Empire, governed in succession by the Normans, the Hohenstauffens, and the House of Anjou, it had never enjoyed the real independence, or the free institutions, of the northern provinces; nor had it been Italianised in the same sense as the rest of the peninsula. Despotism, which assumed so many forms in Italy, was here neither the tyranny of a noble house, nor the masked autocracy of a *bourgeois*, nor yet the forceful sway of a *condottiere*. It had a dynastic character, resembling the monarchy of one of the great European nations, but modified by the peculiar conditions of Italian statecraft. Owing to this dynastic and monarchical complexion of the Neapolitan kingdom, semi-feudal customs flourished in the south far more than in the north of Italy. The barons were more powerful; and the destinies of the Regno often turned upon their feuds and quarrels with the Crown. At the same time the Neapolitan despots shared the uneasy circumstances of all Italian potentates, owing to the uncertainty of their tenure, both as conquerors and aliens, and also as the nominal vassals of the Holy See. The rights of suzerainty which the Normans had yielded to the Papacy over their southern conquests, and which the Popes had arbitrarily exercised in the favour of the Angevine princes, proved a constant source of peril to the rest of Italy by rendering the succession to the Crown of Naples doubtful. On the extinction of the Angevine line, however, the throne was occupied by a prince who had no valid title but that of the sword to its possession. Alfonso of Aragon conquered Naples in 1442, and neglecting his hereditary dominion, settled in his Italian capital. Possessed with the enthusiasm for literature which was then the ruling passion of the Italians, and very liberal to men of learning, Alfonso won for himself the surname of Magnanimous. On his death, in 1458, he bequeathed his Spanish kingdom, together with Sicily and Sardinia, to his brother, and left the fruits of his Italian conquest to his bastard, Ferdinand. This Ferdinand, whose birth was buried in profound obscurity, was the reigning sovereign in the year 1492. Of a cruel and sombre temperament, traitorous and tyrannical, Ferdinand was hated by his subjects as much as Alfonso had been loved. He possessed, however, to a remarkable degree, the qualities which at that epoch constituted a consummate statesman; and though the history of his reign is the history of plots and conspiracies, of judicial murders and forcible assassinations, of famines produced by iniquitous taxation, and of every kind of diabolical tyranny, Ferdinand contrived to hold his own, in the teeth of a rebellious baronage or a maddened population. His political sagacity amounted almost to a prophetic instinct in the last years of his life, when he became aware that the old order was breaking up in Italy, and had cause to dread that Charles VIII.

of France would prove his title to the kingdom of Naples by force of arms.*

Such were the component parts of the Italian body politic, with the addition of numerous petty principalities and powers, adhering more or less consistently to one or other of the greater states. The whole complex machine was bound together by no sense of common interest, animated by no common purpose, amenable to no central authority. Even such community of feeling as one spoken language gives, was lacking. And yet Italy distinguished herself clearly from the rest of Europe, not merely as a geographical fact, but also as a people intellectually and spiritually one. The rapid rise of humanism had aided in producing this national self-consciousness. Every state and every city was absorbed in the recovery of culture and in the development of art and literature. Far in advance of the other European nations, the Italians regarded the rest of the world as barbarous, priding themselves the while, in spite of mutual jealousies and hatreds, on their Italic civilisation. They were enormously wealthy. The resources of the Papal treasury, the private fortunes of the Florentine bankers, the riches of the Venetian merchants might have purchased all that France or Germany possessed of value. The single Duchy of Milan yielded to its masters 700,000 golden florins of revenue, according to the computation of De Comines. In default of a confederative system, the several states were held in equilibrium by diplomacy. By far the most important people, next to the despots and the captains of adventure, were ambassadors and orators. War itself had become a matter of arrangement, bargain, and diplomacy. The game of stratagem was played by generals who had been friends yesterday and might be friends again to-morrow, with troops who felt no loyalty whatever for the standards under which they listed. To avoid slaughter and to achieve the ends of warfare by parade and demonstration was the interest of every one concerned. Looking back upon Italy of the fifteenth century, taking account of its religious deadness and moral corruption, estimating the absence of political vigour in the republics and the noxious tyranny of the despots, analysing its lack of national spirit, and comparing its splendid life of cultivated ease with its want of martial energy, we can see but too plainly that contact with a simpler and stronger people could not but produce a terrible catastrophe. The Italians themselves, however, were far from comprehending this. Centuries of undisturbed internal intrigue had accustomed them to play the game of forfeits with each other, and nothing warned them that the time was come at which diplomacy, finesse, and craft would stand them in ill stead against rapacious conquerors.

The storm which began to gather over Italy in the year 1492 had its first beginning in the North. Lodovico Sforza's position in the Duchy of

* Charles claimed under the will of René of Anjou, who in turn claimed under the will of Joan II.

Milan was becoming every day more difficult, when a slight and to all appearances insignificant incident converted his apprehension of danger into panic. It was customary for the States of Italy to congratulate a new Pope on his election by their ambassadors; and this ceremony had now to be performed for Roderigo Borgia. Lodovico proposed that his envoys should go to Rome together with those of Venice, Naples, and Florence; but Piero de' Medici, whose vanity made him wish to send an embassy in his own name, contrived that Lodovico's proposal should be rejected both by Florence and the King of Naples. So strained was the situation of Italian affairs that Lodovico saw in this repulse a menace to his own usurped authority. Feeling himself isolated among the princes of his country, rebuffed by the Medici, and coldly treated by the King of Naples, he turned in his anxiety to France, and advised the young king, Charles VIII., to make good his claim upon the Regno. It was a bold move to bring the foreigner thus into Italy; and even Lodovico, who prided himself upon his sagacity, could not see how things would end. He thought his situation so hazardous, however, that any change must be for the better. Moreover, a French invasion of Naples would tie the hands of his natural foe, King Ferdinand, whose granddaughter, Isabella of Aragon, had married Giovanni Galeazzo Sforza, and was now the rightful Duchess of Milan. When the Florentine ambassador at Milan asked him how he had the courage to expose Italy to such peril, his reply betrayed the egotism of his policy: "You talk to me of Italy; but when have I looked Italy in the face? No one ever gave a thought to my affairs. I have, therefore, had to give them such security as I could."

Charles VIII. was young, light-brained, romantic, and ruled by *parvenus*, who had an interest in disturbing the old order of the monarchy. He lent a willing ear to Lodovico's invitation, backed as this was by the eloquence and passion of numerous Italian refugees and exiles. Against the advice of his more prudent counsellors, he taxed all the resources of his kingdom, and concluded treaties on disadvantageous terms with England, Germany, and Spain, in order that he might be able to concentrate all his attention upon the Italian expedition. At the end of the year 1493, it was known that the invasion was resolved upon. Gentile Zecchi, the Florentine envoy at the Court of France, wrote to Pietro de' Medici: "If the King succeeds, it is all over with Italy—*tutta a bordello*." The extraordinary selfishness of the several Italian States at this critical moment deserves to be noticed. The Venetians, as Paolo Antonio Soderini described them to Piero de' Medici, "are of opinion that to keep quiet, and to see other potentates of Italy spending and suffering, cannot but be to their advantage. They trust no one, and feel sure they have enough money to be able at any moment to raise sufficient troops, and so to guide events according to their inclinations." As the invasion was directed against Naples, Ferdinand of Aragon displayed the acutest sense of the situation. "Frenchmen," he exclaimed,

in what appears like a prophetic passion when contrasted with the cold indifference of others no less really menaced, "have never come into Italy without inflicting ruin; and this invasion, if rightly considered, cannot but bring universal ruin, although it seems to menace us alone." In his agony Ferdinand applied to Alexander VI. But the Pope looked coldly upon him, because the King of Naples, with rare perspicacity, had predicted that his elevation to the Papacy would prove disastrous to Christendom. Alexander preferred to ally himself with Venice and Milan. Upon this Ferdinand wrote as follows: "It seems fated that the Popes should leave no peace in Italy. We are compelled to fight; but the Duke of Bari (*i.e.* Lodovico Sforza) should think what may ensue from the tumult he is stirring up. He who raises this wind will not be able to lay the tempest when he likes. Let him look to the past, and he will see how every time that our internal quarrels have brought Powers from beyond the Alps into Italy, these have oppressed and lorded over her."

Terribly verified as these words were destined to be,—and they were no less prophetic in their political sagacity than Savonarola's prediction of the Sword and bloody Scourge,—it was now too late to avert the coming ruin. On March 1, 1494, Charles was with his army at Lyons. Early in September he had crossed the pass of Mont Genève and taken up his quarters in the town of Asti. There is no need to describe in detail the holiday march of the French troops through Lombardy, Tuscany, and Rome, until, without having struck a blow of consequence, the gates of Naples opened to receive the conqueror upon February 22, 1495. Philippe de Comines, who parted from the King at Asti and passed the winter as his envoy at Venice, has more than once recorded his belief that nothing but the direct interposition of Providence could have brought so mad an expedition to so successful a conclusion. *Dieu monstroit conduire l'entreprise.* No sooner, however, was Charles installed in Naples than the States of Italy began to combine against him. Lodovico Sforza had availed himself of the general confusion consequent upon the first appearance of the French to poison his nephew. He was, therefore, now the titular as well as virtual Lord of Milan. So far, he had achieved what he desired, and had no further need of Charles. The overtures he now made to the Venetians and the Pope terminated in a League between these Powers for the expulsion of the French from Italy. Germany and Spain entered into the same alliance; and De Comines, finding himself treated with marked coldness by the Signory of Venice, despatched a courier to warn Charles in Naples of the coming danger. After a stay of only fifty days in his new capital, the French King hurried northward. Moving quickly through the Papal States and Tuscany, he engaged his troops in the passes of the Apennines near Pontremoli, and on July 5, 1495, took up his quarters in the village of Fornovo. De Comines reckons that his whole fighting force at this time did not exceed 9,000 men, with fourteen pieces of

artillery. Against him at the opening of the valley was the army of the League, numbering some 35,000 men, of whom three-fourths were supplied by Venice, the rest by Lodovico Sforza and the German Emperor. Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, was the general of the Venetian forces; and on him, therefore, fell the real responsibility of the battle.

De Comines remarks on the imprudence of the allies, who allowed Charles to advance as far as Fornovo, when it was their obvious policy, as anyone can see upon the spot, to have established themselves in the village and so have caught the French troops in a trap. It was a Sunday when the French marched down upon Fornovo. Before them spread the plain of Lombardy, and beyond it the white crests of the Alps. "We were," says De Comines, "in a valley between two little mountain flanks, and in that valley ran a river which could easily be forded on foot, except when it is swelled with sudden rains. The whole valley was a bed of gravel and big stones, very difficult for horses, about a quarter of a league in breadth, and on the right bank lodged our enemies." Anyone who has visited Fornovo can see at a glance the situation of the two armies. Charles occupied the village on the right bank of the Taro. On the same bank, extending downward toward the plain, lay the host of the allies; and in order that Charles should escape them, it was necessary that he should cross the Taro just below its junction with the Ceno, and reach Lombardy by marching in a parallel line with his foes.

All through the night of Sunday it thundered and rained incessantly; so that on the Monday morning the Taro was considerably swollen. At seven o'clock the King sent for De Comines, who found him already armed and mounted on the finest horse he had ever seen. The name of this charger was *Savoy*. He was black, one-eyed, and of middling height; and to his great courage, as we shall see, Charles owed life upon that day. The French army, ready for the march, now took to the gravelly bed of the Taro, passing the river at a distance of about a quarter of a league from the allies. As the French left Fornovo, the light cavalry of their enemies entered the village and began to attack the baggage. At the same time the Marquis of Mantua, with the flower of his men-at-arms, crossed the Taro and harassed the rear of the French host; while raids from the right bank to the left were constantly being made by sharpshooters and flying squadrons. "At this moment," says De Comines, "not a single man of us could have escaped if our ranks had once been broken." The French army was divided into three main bodies. The vanguard consisted of some 350 men-at-arms, 3,000 Switzers, 300 archers of the Guard, a few mounted crossbow-men, and the artillery. Next came the Battle, and after this the rearguard. At the time when the Marquis of Mantua made his attack, the French rearguard had not yet crossed the river. Charles quitted the van, put himself at the head of his chivalry and charged the Italian horsemen, driving them back, some

to the village and others to their camp. De Comines observes, that had the Italian knights been supported in this passage of arms by the light cavalry of the Venetian force, called Stradiots, the French must have been outnumbered, thrown into confusion, and defeated. As it was, these Stradiots were engaged in plundering the baggage of the French; and the Italians, accustomed to bloodless encounters, did not venture, in spite of their immense superiority of numbers, to renew the charge. In the pursuit of Gonzaga's horsemen Charles outstripped his staff, and was left almost alone to grapple with a little band of mounted foemen. It was here that his noble horse Savoy saved his person by plunging and charging till assistance came up from the French, and enabled the King to regain his van.

It is incredible, considering the nature of the ground and the number of the troops engaged, that the allies should not have returned to the attack and have made the passage of the French into the plain impossible. De Comines, however, assures us that the actual engagement only lasted a quarter of an hour, and the pursuit of the Italians three quarters of an hour. After they had once resolved to fly, they threw away their lances and betook themselves to Reggio and Parma. So complete was their discomfiture that De Comines gravely blames the want of military genius in the French host. If, instead of advancing along the left bank of the Taro and there taking up his quarters for the night, Charles had recrossed the stream and pursued the army of the allies, he would have had the whole of Lombardy at his discretion. As it was, the French army encamped not far from the scene of the action in great discomfort and anxiety. De Comines had to bivouac in a vineyard, without even a mantle to wrap round him, having lent his cloak to the King in the morning; and as it had been pouring all day, the ground could not have afforded very luxurious quarters. The same extraordinary luck which had attended the French in their whole expedition now favoured their retreat; and the same pusillanimity which the allies had shown at Fornovo, prevented them from re-forming and engaging with the army of Charles upon the plain. One hour before daybreak on Tuesday morning the French broke up their camp and succeeded in clearing the valley. That night they lodged at Fiorenzuola, the next at Piacenza, and so on; till on the eighth day they arrived at Asti without having been so much as incommoded by the army of the allies in their rear.

Although the field of Fornovo was in reality so disgraceful to the Italians, they reckoned it a victory upon the technical pretence that the camp and baggage of the French had been seized. Illuminations and rejoicings made the piazza of St. Mark in Venice gay, and Francesco da Gonzaga had the glorious Madonna della Vittoria painted for him by Mantegna in commemoration of what ought to have been remembered only with shame.

A fitting conclusion to this sketch, connecting its close with the commencement, may be found in some remarks upon the manner of warfare

to which the Italians of the Renaissance had become accustomed, and which proved so futile on the field of Fornovo. During the middle ages, and in the days of the Communes, the whole male population of Italy had fought light-armed on foot. Merchant and artisan left the counting-house and the workshop, took shield and pike, and sallied forth to attack the barons in their castles, or to meet the Emperor's troops upon the field. It was with this national militia that the citizens of Florence freed their *Contado* of nobles, and the burghers of Lombardy gained the battle of Legnano. In course of time, by a process of change which it is not very easy to trace, heavily armed cavalry began to take the place of infantry in mediæval warfare. Men-at-arms, as they were called, encased from head to foot in iron and mounted upon chargers no less solidly caparisoned, drove the foot-soldiers before them at the points of their long lances. Nowhere in Italy do they seem to have met with the fierce resistance which the bears of the Swiss Oberland and the bulls of Uri offered to the knights of Burgundy. No Tuscan Arnold von Winkelried clasped a dozen lances to his bosom that the foeman's ranks might thus be broken at the cost of his own life; nor did it occur to the Italian burghers to meet the charge of the horsemen with squares protected by bristling spears. They seem, on the contrary, to have abandoned military service with the readiness of men whose energies were already absorbed in the affairs of peace. To become a practised and efficient man-at-arms required long training and a life's devotion. So much time the burghers of the free towns could not spare to military service,^a while the petty nobles were only too glad to devote themselves to so honourable a calling. Thus it came to pass that a class of professional fighting-men was gradually formed in Italy, whose services the burghers and the princes bought, and by whom the wars of the peninsula were regularly farmed by contract. Wealth and luxury in the great cities continued to increase; and as the burghers grew more comfortable, they were less inclined to take the field in their own persons, and more disposed to vote large sums of money for the purchase of necessary aid. At the same time this system suited the despots, since it spared them the peril of arming their own subjects, while they taxed them to pay the services of foreign captains. War thus became a commerce. Romagna, the Marches of Ancona, and other parts of the Papal dominions, supplied a number of petty nobles whose whole business in life it was to form companies of trained horsemen, and with these bands to hire themselves out to the republics and the despots. Gain was the sole purpose of these captains. They sold their service to the highest bidder, fighting irrespectively of principle or patriotism, and passing with the coldest equanimity from the camp of one master to that of his worst foe. It was impossible that true military spirit should survive this prostitution of the art of war. A species of mock warfare prevailed in Italy. Battles were fought with a view to booty more than victory; prisoners were taken for the sake of ransom; bloodshed was carefully avoided, for the men who fought on

either side in any pitched field had been comrades with their present foemen in the last encounter, and who could tell how soon the general of the one host might not need his rival's troops to recruit his own ranks) Like every genuine institution of the Italian Renaissance, warfare was thus a work of fine art, a masterpiece of intellectual subtlety; and like the Renaissance itself, this peculiar form of warfare was essentially transitional. The cannon and the musket were already in use; and it only required one blast of gunpowder to turn the sham-fight of courtly, traitorous, finessing captains of adventure into something terribly more real. To men like the Marquis of Mantua war had been a highly profitable game of skill; to men like the *Maréchal de Gié* it was a murderous horse-play; and this difference the Italians were not slow to perceive. When they cast away their lances at Fornovo, and fled—in spite of their superior numbers—never to return, one fair-seeming sham of the fifteenth century became a vision of the past.

J. A. S.

Literary Coincidences.

"ONE of the most elegant of literary recreations," says D'Israeli, "is that of tracing poetical or prose imitations and similarities, for assuredly similarity is not always imitation." But even if it were, what then! All the best literary works that the world has seen are little more than imitations or imitations of imitations. The Romans imitated the Greeks, and the moderns have imitated both. Virgil imitated Homer and Ennius, Terence Menander. Molière's *Amphitryon* is an imitation of Plautus, who imitated it from the Greeks, who imitated it from India. Pity that the work of Aretades on *Coincidences*, quoted by Eusebius in his *Evangelical Prologues*, is lost! We might learn from it more things about the ancients than are dreamt of in our philosophy. We might learn that even those supposed most original were as much indebted to their predecessors, as Boileau and Dante, Mariana and Milton. Besides, the ultimate work imitated by art is in itself but an imitation of nature. Literary imitation is, then, not only a matter of right, but a matter of necessity. Him who does not imitate the ancients, says Boileau, none will imitate. What is the result of a man trying to stand on his own bottom in the minor circumstance of expression? He becomes a Gongora, or a Marini, a Cleveland, or a Lohenstein. One can say nothing that has not been already said as well or better in the old time which was before him. We live too late, said La Bruyère, to produce anything new. Alfred de Musset, when accused by some amateur or professional literary detective of imitating the author of *Childe Harold*, that troubled imaginary being, showed how the amiable apostle of misanthropy had himself imitated Pulci and many more of the old Italian poets. The Frenchman's conclusion,

Rien n'appartient à rien, tout appartient à tous,

expresses with the circular completeness of aphoristic truth what Voltaire had already represented with his usual finesse in the light of a similitude. "*Il en est des livres comme du feu dans nos foyers. On va prendre ce feu chez son voisin, on l'allume chez soi, on le communique à d'autres, et il appartient à tous.*"

To trace and bring into juxtaposition the rarer examples of similarity or of coincidence in thought or in verbal expression is indeed an elegant and useful labour, but to collate the more common conceptions and forms of speech, though it afford some sort of literary recreation to a few, must to the wiser part of mankind appear only busy idleness and

a waste of time. The nation of *ardeliones*, who *multa agendo nihil agunt*, survived the fable of Phædrus in Rome and elsewhere.

Many pages have been occupied, with admirable economy of time and toil, by what are called parallel passages, wherein the parallelism too often consists in the use by various authors of one or more words of daily household, natural, and familiar use. Passages containing these remarkable instances of verbal similarity are collected and collated with the utmost care, and cannot but be most acceptable to any well-directed curiosity. One celebrated critic shows that the term "brown" has been applied to night both by Milton and Thomson; and that Metastasio and Lucretius both alluded to the "laughter" of the sea; another that Dryden's or Chaucer's "Horizon," Langhorne's "Florâ," and Gray's "Flowers" all "laughed;" and that Sir William Jones, with the spirit of Oriental poetry, has the "laughing" air.

A word affording capital sport to the hunters of the so-called parallel passages is "purple." This adjective they may find in ancient verse applied with equal audacity to a swan, a snow-storm, and a ghost. Gray used it of the light of love, Virgil and Tasso of the light of youth, and Addison of the light of a landscape. Succeeding poets have introduced this elastic expression in various senses, according to the exigencies of the inspiration of their verse. Any poet, *soi-disant*, or with the public diploma, who has put, at the present day, "purple" into his rhymes, becomes at once fair game, and is either tracked through the snow of his predecessors, hunted down as a plagiarist, and bared of his "purple," *furtivis nudata coloribus*, or he is set in the pillory of public admiration for the purpose of showing the sagacity of others who can prove that somebody has somewhere at some time used the same word before him. In this latter case follow passages causing a heavy run on the compositor's notes of admiration. Jones and Smith, ay, and Robinson too, it may be, have all applied "purple" to something—an incident about as remarkable as three men wearing a white hat in the month of August—but in the matter of the "purple" it is an extraordinary coincidence of expression! a wonderful harmony of words!! an electric communion of uttered intelligences!!! a surprising sympathetic coalition of unrelated talent!!!! Such is the judgment of those who allow that two men may hit on the same term without indebtedness on either side. But there are who judge less charitably—unclean harpies who love to bellow the author's airy banquet, and pour the bitter waters of detraction over his dessert. These cry with one accord, rank Plagiarism! It is in vain to urge that the word is as common in poetic use as those meteorological *entamures*, "It is very cold," "We must expect more rain," in civilised society. That the poet has placed it in a new light, given to it additional significance, set the jewel in a more delicate setting of more valuable gold. That plagiarism in one sense is common to all great writers from Virgil downwards, who, having robbed Ennius, abused him, as is usual, afterwards, by calling him a dunghill; and that Homer is

perhaps only original because the matter he imitated has perished of age, or, as other authors declare, been by himself destroyed. That Shakespeare allowed himself to be guilty of it, calling it the introduction into good society of young girls, who had till his time moved in bad company. That Milton's prose, "stiff with gorgeous embroidery," owes most of its golden threads to Greek, Latin, and Italian spinning-wheels. That Molière said "*Je reprends mon bien où je le trouve.*" That Dumas is about equally indebted to Schiller and Sir Walter Scott. That even the pious Fathers of the Church condescended to dip their pens in the minds of other people; and that Loyola, to fill his *Exercices Spirituels*, undoubtedly made a large hole in the sacred tank of Cisneras, Abbé of Montserrat. All this has been urged before and often, but to so little purpose as probably it will be urged in the future, when, to use the sublime expression of Tyndall, to be regarded with the more reverence as utterly beyond all ordinary intellectual reach, "the writer and reader, like streaks of morning cloud, shall have melted away into the infinite azure of the past."

There are many excellent ideas, for example, Carlyle's Eternal Verities, which must apparently, in the nature of things, be everlastingly recooked in the literary kitchen, and served at the table of the present, with a fresh and piquante sauce. The moon will probably long continue to do duty in many different skies as an image of repose; the sea smiling and ruining on many diverse shores, as an emblem of woman. Spring will be sung with more or fewer variations, in much the same style, in which it has been sung since the time of the Troubadours and before them; but always by an English poet with the same exact reference to an English climate; the shadows of night will continue to remind man, with more or less poetic intensity of expression, of the shadows of another night without a dawn; and the fall of succeeding generations is little likely to be ever better or otherwise expressed than by the continuous dropping of the autumn leaves.

The old wine is indeed put into new bottles, but it is still the same old wine. The new bottles are a necessity imposed on the poetic or prosaic wine merchant; without them, nine-tenths of the public could not be induced to taste the wine. Pope expected no brisk sale of his *Essay on Criticism*, a well-known *réchauffé*, since he believed that not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it. The gentleman and the education of his time were scarcely of a lower character than those of the present. Add to this that the style of the *Essay* has become antiquated. Probably not one gentleman in a hundred would understand it now. It is old wine in an old bottle. Surely those who accommodate the same subject to the general taste, who convey the same instruction to mankind in a more grateful vehicle, have as much claim to originality as the author himself has, at least, in the opinion of him who has studied the strictures of Mr. Elwin. They deserve credit for making food of the many what was only food for the few. There are

whose eyes are too weak for sunlight. They close or blink before all original shine, except that of a halfpenny tallow dip, but yet will admit the milder radiance of the moon's borrowed and reflected beam. How many pass contentedly away with Prior's *Hans Carvel*, who could never read the expedient which *frère Jan* revealed to Panurge, or Poggio's account of the Devil's appearance to Francis Philadelphus; how many comfort their piety with Tupper, whose teeth, to borrow an Italian metaphor, Jeremy Taylor would closely bind. Old authors are apt to be presented badly printed and very much in the rough; the new rejoice in the best type and the glossiest of paper. The reading public is very much influenced by outward appearances; old authors are admired but they are not read. They are esteemed almost as much as they are eschewed. Like the relics of saints, they are held in too great reverence to be touched. The brave artist who, in spite of the risk of being called a plagiarist, dares to dress them in more fashionable but less lasting garments, to serve up their apples of gold on his platters of alabaster plate, deserves recognition as a valuable member of society, and is likely to obtain it in spite of the disinterested critic, who holds folk by the button-hole in the highways and the by-ways, to tell them that there is death in the brave artist's pot. It is all one to them. They are perhaps instructed, and they are certainly pleased. The critic sings to deaf ears, and might as well hang up his harp under the trees on the Thames Embankment at once, and weep over the brutishness of the modern Babylon.

The doctrine that advises man to live for the present and not for the future, which makes the rose the emblem of the fast fleeting spring of life, as it is the sign and symbol of the soon fading youth of the solar year, is perhaps to be found in the language of every land where roses bloom. Ausonius, in one of his Idyls, following Mimnermus—and who can say how many more?—bids the virgin gather roses whilst the flower is new and her age new also, mindful that life, like the flower, quickly passes away. Parson Herrick, in his unbaptised rhymes which preceded the dull piety of his *Noble Numbers*, also advises his virgins to make much of time in verses too well known to need quotation. The author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* gives as a sample of the incorrect reasoning of the ungodly, "Come on . . . let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered." And Spenser, following an Italian leader, introduces, in his description of Acrasia's "Bower of Bliss," this portion of song—

Gather, therefore, the rose whilst yet is prime,

For soon comes age that will her pride deflowre :

Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,

Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equall crime !

Crabbe, in his introduction to his *Parish Register*, describing the collection of cottage reading set on the deal shelf beside the cuckoo clock, mentions the newly-bound Bible bought with weekly-saved sixpences, but containing unfortunately such comments as induce the rustic to cavil and ask, "why?" and "how?" Far better are those plain commen-

tators, says Crabbe, only half in irony, who run from everything doubtful or dark, and "hold their glimmering tapers to the sun." Young, in his last satire to Walpole, little thought how very near he was to prophetic truth when he said in his haste that some succeeding muse should tell, among other matters—

How commentators each dark passage shun,
And hold their farthing candle to the sun.

The idea of holding a taper or candle to the sun, which constitutes in both cases the tropical splendour of the quotation, is to be found in English poetry at least as early as the days of Henry VIII. The sacred rage of the noble Surrey, reproving all that compared their loves with that bright object of his own vow, fair Geraldine, speaks of them as "matching candles with the sun." Algernon Sidney, in his *Discourses on Government*, shows by many examples that government to be the best which best provides for war; if more examples be wanted, he says, they may easily be found, but it is not necessary "to light a candle to the sun;" and Selden, in the preface to his *Mare Clausum*, addressed to King Charles, after giving instances of the enclosure of part of the ocean by the Athenians against the Persians, and by Pope Alexander II., as private property, adds there are many other instances, but "*facult solem illustrare supersedeo*."

Repetitions of proverbs are scarcely to be regarded as instances of literary coincidence. But as they are sometimes so regarded, two examples are here given. That mirror of knighthood, Sir Hudibras, had, says the pathetic Butler, among many other branches of learning, the power of making exquisitely apposite replies; in short, "for every why he had a wherefore." The same proverbial expression occurs in the *Comedy of Errors*, where Dromio of Syracuse asks his master Antipholus what reason he has for beating him. "Shall I tell you why?" asks Antipholus. "Ay, sir," answers Dromio, "and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore." The proverb, "lean as a rake," is applied by Chaucer to the clerk of Oxenford's horse, and by Spenser to Maleger, the quaking captain of the soldiers which besieged Alma's Castle. This proverb is not uncommon at the present day. It is remarkable for the diversity of opinion which it provoked between Steevens and Dr. Johnson, the former giving the word *rake* its ordinary meaning of an instrument for making hay, while the latter held it to signify a dog too worthless to be fed.

Omitting further instance of these commonplaces of thought, we pass on to the rarer similarities, first of idea, and afterwards of expression.

Churchill, in his *Apology to the Critical Reviewers*, accuses Foote, whom he calls the small wit in modern tragedy, of stealing and spoiling other men's plots—

Like gipsies, lest the stolen brat be known,
Defacing first, then claiming for his own.

Sir Fretful Plagiary, in *The Critic*, shows Sneer the danger of leaving his play in the hands of professional authors, who may serve his best thoughts as "gipsies do stolen children, disfigure 'em to make them pass for their own." The right honourable gentleman, Mr. Dundas, might have retorted on Sheridan half of that well-known portion of the witty writer's speech against him. If Sheridan was not indebted for his facts to his imagination, at least Dundas might have accused him of being indebted in one instance to his memory for his jests. Sheridan is somewhat unfortunate in his good things. Had he been born before Churchill, he would doubtless have used the simile of the gipsies first, but even then, unless he had been born in the century preceding Churchill, he could not well have anticipated Le Sage, in his compliment to Mr. Dundas. Who can forget Laura's description to Gil Blas of that *original* with the knot in his dyed dark hair, and the *feuille morte* feathers in his hat, the famous Seigneur Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria, under which title Le Sage satirizing the famous actor Baron, says of him "*que son esprit brille aux dépens de sa mémoire.*"

Burns asking Summer to "tarry the longest" in the neighbourhood of Montgomery Castle, where the bard bid a last good-bye to his Highland Mary, reminds the reader of Goldsmith, who has left it on record that "parting summers lingering blooms delayed" at his deserted village of Auburn.

Disraeli, in *Lothair*, describing critics as "men who had failed in literature and art," was none the less amusing or instructive, because Shenstone had given the same thought with additions and improvements before him—"a poet that fails often becomes a morose critic; weak white wine makes excellent vinegar." Nor was Shenstone in his time probably less amusing or instructive, because Dryden, in his Dedication of his Translations of Ovid, wrote that Sackville said something very similar to Shenstone.

Matt. Prior was wont, in the intervals of cork-drawing in his uncle's alehouse—the "Rummer" Tavern at Charing Cross—to read Horace's *Odes*. That epicurean bard was his favourite author. He seems to have imagined it the highest happiness to be driving in a little Dutch chaise, with Horace on one side and a gay lady on the other. On one occasion the Earl of Dorset found him at his favourite recreation, reading Horace, in the "Rummer" Tavern. Dorset behaved kindly to him, and Prior in return celebrated the solidity of his judgment. Among other complimentary remarks, he called every one of the peer's pieces "an ingot of gold" intrinsically valuable, and such as wrought or beaten thinner would "shine" through a whole book of any other author. Whately, in his Preface to Bacon's *Essays*, uses the same metaphor. The essays are "gold ingots" not needing to be gilt or polished, but requiring to be hammered out in order to display their full value.

In a poem addressed to Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, his *collaborateur* to a very small extent in the *Town-mouse and Country-*

mouse, the celebrated parody of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, Prior says—

From ignorance our comfort flows,
The only wretched are the wise.

Gray, in his ode *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, observing the Eton boys playing, whom he describes as little victims regardless of their doom, without thought of the morrow, is of opinion that it is better so—

Where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise.

Prior, in his *Solomon*, says—

Amid two seas, on one small point of land,
Wearied, uncertain, and amazed we stand.

And Charles Wesley, in one of his pious songs, sings—

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand.

It is not so much the perfection of sense or conception, writes Pope, in a letter to Walsh, to say things never said before, as to express that best which has been said oftenest. Neither Whately, Gray, nor Wesley seems to have improved on Prior, whether their lines be the result of accidental similitude or of artful imitation.

All the foregoing passages and many more which might be quoted are merely instances of coincidence of thought. They are examples of that parallelism of idea which was and is noted by commentators. It is far from uncommon. Montesquieu, as the reader will remember, undertook to find in a single author, in Cardan, all the most acute conceptions which have delighted the world.

The more remarkable instances which follow are coincidences of words. In these not only are two authors inspired with precisely the same idea, but also with exactly the same expression. Not only are the features the same, but they are set in the same proportion. Amidst infinite possibilities of combination of colour these authors have by the strangest chance painted their conception in one and the same tint.

Pope, in an epitaph on Fenton, that right honest person, fat and indolent, commences thus—

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, Here lies an honest man.

Curiously enough, Crashaw, in an epitaph also, and also at the beginning of it, wrote concerning Mr. Ashton, a "conformable" citizen, by which term he seems to mean what we now call a conformist—

The modest front of this small floor,
Believe me, reader, can say more
Than many a braver marble can,
Here lies a truly honest man.

Dryden, in an elegy on Anne Killigrew, one of the maids of honour

of the Duchess of York, a young lady who was remarkable alike for her poems and pictures, at whose birth the most malicious planets were in trine, and who died of small-pox at the age of twenty-five, says—

Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child.

Pope, mourning the death of Gay, calls him—

In wit a man, simplicity a child—

a very frigid commendation, says Dr. Johnson. To have the wit of a man is not much for a poet, though to have more than the wit of man was a circumstance worth mentioning in what old Wood contemptuously calls "womankind."

Among many other surprising verbal similarities in the *Essay on Man*, is the well-known line—

See man for mine, replies a pampered goose,

which recalls Cowley in his *Plagues of Egypt*—

No creature but might since say, Man is mine.

Nor is Pope's "proper study of mankind is man" unlike Charron's sentiment in his *De la sagesse*—

La vray étude de l'homme c'est l'homme.

The coincidences of expression with preceding authors in the *Essay on Criticism* were so numerous as to induce Lady Mary W. Montagu to declare that it was "all stolen." This amiable woman forgot that *les grands esprits souvent se rencontrent*. Pope merely thought by chance, like Cowley and Bolingbroke, and accidentally wrote like Dryden and Boileau.

Blair tells us how the Good that was scorned by man soon after its creation stalked off reluctant like an ill-used ghost not to return, or, if it did, its visits were

Like those of angels, short and far between.

The reader may imagine the distress of the Rev. Robert Blair, when some good-natured friend called to his notice a Rev. John Norris, who died about the time Blair was born, and had left in a printed book his opinion that the most exquisite and strongest joys soonest take their flight, and are

Like angels' visits, short.

But what was the distress of the devout Blair compared with that of the convivial Campbell, who, after requesting every joy to cease to glimmer in his mind, so long as the light of hope was left, informs the public that his own winged hours of bliss have been

Like angel visits, few and far between.

Surely not unmixed with a little natural anger was his sorrow when he learned that he had climbed "the hill that braves the stars" in steps cut by another, that his own pretty sentiment had been sung before him,

and without being spoilt by something almost approaching a pleonasm. Well may the bard of Theodric have exclaimed with Donatus, Jerome's tutor, and the *primum mobile* of primers, "*Pereant illi qui ante nos nostra dixerunt!*" Especially when they have said them better than ourselves.

Goldsmith's *Hermit* would certainly never have "wanted but little" here below, "not wanted that little long," had he been aware that Dr. Young's coeval man also "wanted but little, nor that little long." Nor would Gray's Adversity have affrighted the bad with an iron "scourge" and "torturing hour" had she known that Milton's Moloch had before her feared the "scourge" inexorable, and the "torturing hour" to boot. Gray's Attic Warbler and Pope's Linnet both "pour their throat." Bishop Heber's Temple and Cowper's Russian Palace of Ice have much in common. In the former,

No hammers fell, no ponderous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprang.

In the latter,

Silently as a dream the fabric rose,
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.

Gibbon says the reign of that second Numa, the pious Antonine, is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is indeed little more than "the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." Voltaire, on the occasion of the incarceration of the luckless Ingénu with the Jansenist in the Bastille, says, "*En effet l'histoire n'est que le tableau des crimes et des malheurs.*" But, for this coincidence of truthful expression, the only wonder is that it has not been more frequent.

In a curious poem of an old French poet, De Caux, called *An Hour-glass the Figure of the World*, the world is like a glittering hour-glass; a breath can destroy it, as a breath has produced it: all the men in it are but so many grains of sand, animated, however, adds the cautious De Caux, by a reasonable soul, continually changing their position, each actuated by a different impulse, and all, to a certain extent, unconnected. The turning of the hour-glass represents the vicissitudes of fortune. The mighty are put down from their seat, and the humble and meek are exalted and set in their places. Every man, like every grain of sand, enclosed and pestered in a narrow pinfold of space, travels compulsorily to a common centre, to pass through a straight opening into a world unseen. More happy sands, sings the poet, which may return, unlike men, from the bourn of that undiscovered country. The original, towards the commencement, has:—

*C'est un verre qui luit
Qu'un souffle peut détruire, et qu'un souffle a produit.*

A very nearly literal translation of this occurs in a line of one of Pope's imitations of Horace, where, speaking of the little repose allotted to the candidate for glory, he says,

A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows.

Goldsmith, a better poet by far than political economist, lamenting over the loss of men, which he supposed attendant on the accumulation of wealth in a country, says, in his *Deserted Village*, that a bold peasantry can never be supplied if once destroyed, although princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—

A breath can make them, as a breath has made.

If, after the suggestion of an ingenious critic, we read instead of "can make," "unmakes," which was perhaps what Goldsmith wrote, we obtain a far better sense and a nearer resemblance to old De Caux.

Here follow instances of the repetition of one remarkable word. Dryden, about two hundred years ago, wrote a panegyric on the death, or rather Christian apotheosis, of a certain Eleonora, whom, as he himself confesses, he had never known or even seen. This lady, among other polite comparisons, suggested by that true sorrow for which it is to be hoped the poet was sufficiently paid, he gallantly compares to a precious gum, which is intended to last but a little while in the fire, but while it lasts makes a pleasant smell. Eleonora did not die, but was *exhaled*. A very young gentleman, also celebrated by Dryden, who was utterly without sin, except that original birth-sin inherited from Adam, disappeared in exactly the same manner. He, too, was rarefied—in fact, *exhaled*.

His great Creator drew

His spirit, as the sun the morning dew.

Young's *Narcissa* suffered evaporation in like fashion—

Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew,
She sparkled, was *exhaled*, and went to heaven.

In the dispute between Nym and Pistol, the latter threatening the excellent corporal with the gaping grave, and the nearness of doting death, desires him to *exhale*. The word is of a piece with the half-poetic, half-fantastic web of ancient Pistol's oratory. The keen sagacity of Malone explains *exhale* to mean *draw*, and adduces the stage direction in the old quarto [they draw] as confirmatory of his explanation. But the corporal was desired rather to *exhale* that vital heat which Phædra in Racine begs Ceneone not to endeavour to recall—

Un reste de chaleur tout prêt à s'exhaler.

Lamartine, in his *Méditations*, makes use of the same expression, in an inquiry whether the soul is buried in the night of the tomb, or falls into dust, or

Comme un son qui n'est plus va-t-elle s'exhaler ?

The common term *classic ground* seems to have been first used by Addison, in his *Letter from Italy*; and *porcelain clay* of human kind by Dryden, in *Don Sebastian*, who puts it in the mouth of Muley-Moluch, Emperor of Barbary, with many more poetic phrases, equally suited to such a chief. Every reader will remember how Byron uses the expression in connection with Haidée, in *Don Juan*.

The man Micaiah, whom Ahab, Israel's king, hated because he did not prophesy good concerning him, but evil, has a parallel in Chryses, whom Agamemnon, King of Greece, hated for exactly the same reason, expressed in as nearly as may be the same words—

οὐ πάποτε μοι τὸ κρήνην εἶπες
αἰεὶ τοι τὰ κακ' ἐστὶ φίλα φρεσὶ μυθήσασθαι.

The angel in the Apocalypse shows John a pure "river of water proceeding out of the throne of God." The sharper in the *Trinummus* tells, in an imaginary account of his travels to the Athenian merchant Charmides, that he was carried up to the skies in a little skiff against the tide, and there saw, not indeed Jupiter, for he happened to be gone to his country-house, but the source of "the river which proceeds out of the throne of Jove in heaven." The old merchant is very properly shocked, and says no decent person ought to mention such matters.

As far back as the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero, Seneca, writing a tragedy on the madness of Hercules, which may have served as a hint to Ariosto for the fury of his Orlando, makes Juno prologize in these words—

Quæris Alcides paræm?
Nemo est, nisi ipse: bella jam secum gerat.

About two centuries and a half ago, Master Massinger dedicated to a certain lady, what with the despicable cant of literary modesty (to cull a flower from the garden of the good-natured lexicographer) he called the "weak and imperfect labour" of the Duke of Milan. In this play, Sforza, the supposed Duke, an eccentric character, thinks no woman equal to his wife, and is nearly murdering his imperialist friend, Pescara, for presuming to think otherwise. She has, he says, no equal, her goodness disdains comparison—

And but herself admits no parallel.

In the "Double Falsehood" or the "Distrest Lovers," taken from a novel in *Don Quixote*, and presented, according to common fame, by Shakespeare to one of his natural daughters, Theobald was the first to detect a remnant of the pen of that genius. The "heavy pedant" released it from obscurity, revised it, and produced it at Covent Garden Theatre, about the middle of the last century. Julio, Henriquez, and Leonora correspond respectively with Anselmo, Lotario, and Camila in the *Curioso Impertinente* of Cervantes. Julio, speaking of the baseness of Henriquez in betraying him, says it is the deepest—

None but itself can be its parallel.

And this is the very line which Pope, whom Dr. Johnson held equally remarkable as a poet and a critic, abuses as a masterpiece of absurdity, as profundity itself, in his *Treatise on Bathos*, or poetic sinking, and

supposes it copied from a Smithfield showman, who wrote in large letters over the picture of an elephant which adorned his booth—

The greatest elephant in the world, except himself.

Waller, in a poem on *Tea*, which had the honour of being commended by her Majesty—the tea only, not the poem—informs the reader that this foreign infusion aids the poetic fancy, represses vapours in the head, and—

Keeps that palace of the soul serene.

When we meet with Byron mourning over the temple of Minerva, in *Childe Harold*, and speaking of a skull that turns up by chance, in precisely the same words—

The dome of thought, the palace of the soul—

like the Abbé in the tale, we rise and bow in polite recognition of our old familiar friends.

As the same sentiment seems to have offered itself spontaneously in the same words to Byron as to Waller, so, making allowance for the difference of language, did the same sentiment in the same words offer itself to Waller as to Grotius, who wrote—

Unica lux sæcli, genitoris gloria, nemo
Quem puerum, nemo credidit esse senem.

Waller begins his epitaph on Lady Sedley thus—

Here lies the learned Savil's heir;
So early wise and lasting fair!
That none, except her years they told,
Thought her a child, or thought her old.

Sterne's verbal resemblances are almost too well known. Here are a few. Sterne says, "Tis an inevitable chance, the first statute in Magna Charta, an everlasting Act of Parliament, all must die." So in precisely the same words said Burton. Sterne asked, "Kingdoms and provinces, and towns and cities, have they not their periods?" Burton anticipated the question, and answered thus: "Kingdoms, provinces, cities, and towns have their periods." "'Tis a shame," said Mr. Shandy, *à propos* of his son's death, "'tis a shame in such a tempest to have but one anchor." "Thou maist be ashamed," said Burton, with Seneca, "in such a tempest" as this, "to have but one anchor." Many more equally surprising coincidences are to be found in Dr. Ferriar, who has treated Sterne almost as kindly as Cajot treated Jean Jacques, but "*le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire*." Nor are such coincidences excluded from Sterne's *Sermons*. The Levite, who considered he had served at God's altar to little purpose, where his business was to sue for mercy, had he not learned to practise it, is in exactly the same predicament described *totidem verbis* as the Levite of Bishop Hall. Only too often, however, if we may suspect the reverend gentleman of getting literary

riches, and not by right, is he in the condition of Jeremy's partridge which sits on eggs but cannot hatch them.

Coleridge said, in the *Devil's Thoughts*, that the arch apostate's "darling sin is pride that apes humility." Southey, in his *Devil's Walk*, said the same, with the sole substitution of "favourite" for "darling." The humorous and passionate Wordsworth, in his autobiographical poem known as the *Prelude*, in which he describes the growth of a poet's mind, informs the fit audience, if few, interested in such a subject, how in a search for beautiful scenery he explored the stream which passes through Dovedale, and the hidden tracts of his own native region, and between these wanderings was blessed with the presence of that sole sister, who seemed—

another morn
Risen on mid noon.

How surprised must that pious son of Apollo have been, who regarded all good poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, on meeting an unexpected coincidence of expression in Milton, in whose *Paradise Lost*, Adam, calling Eve's attention to the approach of Raphael, also describes the glorious shape of that angel, as

Another morn risen on mid noon.

Asia, relating her dream to Panthea, in the lonely vale of the Indian Caucasus, in Shelley's *Prometheus*, says,

A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard: "O, follow, follow, follow me!"

In Tennyson's *Princess*, the fair blue-eyed Prince hears a *wind arise*, which wind *shakes* shrieks of wild woods together, and a voice says, "*Follow, follow.*" In this undesigned coincidence the branch of the original thought has rather withered and dried up than increased and multiplied with other branches bearing fruit or flower. The Poet Laureate has not added to what Shelley left us; he has not, on this occasion at least, set one more star in that milky way of phantasy, which someone, who despaired of all originality, seeing that even God made man in his own image, has said, should satisfy the ambition of the ablest authors.

All the preceding quotations are taken from languages fairly familiar, and most of them are comparatively modern. Equally curious coincidences may probably be found in every age and in every language possessing a literature mapped out by circles of latitude and longitude over the whole globe. But the discussion of a subject almost unlimited mundane regard of space must limit, and the remembrance of that excellent maxim, "Nothing too much," a remark whereto no few resemblances in many a time and tongue will certainly reward the solicitude of him who is inquisitive enough to search for them.

Julius Gellius and his Contemporaries.

THE literary history of the second century has yet to be written. By one of those unfortunate accidents which occasionally disfigure the records of conscientious and impartial research, this remarkable era appears to have been on principle desultorily and imperfectly studied. Historians like Gibbon have contemplated it merely as the stage on which Hadrian and the Antonines, Commodus and Pertinax, evolved their imposing and contrasted political drama; theologians have regarded it merely as the battle-ground between expiring Paganism and nascent Christianity, and literary annalists like Tiraboschi have, half contemptuously, abandoned it to lively essayists who have in their turn treated it exclusively as the age of Marcus Aurelius, Lucian, and Apuleius; and those distinguished men were undoubtedly its brightest ornaments. But Marcus Aurelius represents only one side of its many-sided life: Lucian and Apuleius, with all their versatile industry, and in spite of the multitudinous scenes and figures which crowd their living canvas, represent only another. Nor are their pictures always to be depended upon. They were both rhetoricians, with all the vices of their class, and they belonged, moreover, to a class of writers whose representations have in all ages been very naturally mistrusted. They were not only satirists and philosophers, in an age when satire had divorced itself from justice, and philosophy from an honest regard for truth, but they belonged to the worst clique of a decadent society. It would indeed be as absurd to look for a fair representation of the literary energy of the second century in the spiteful persiflage of Lucian or in the vicious kaleidoscope of Apuleius, as it would be to suppose that the literary society of George III.'s reign is delineated not in the pages of honest Boswell, but in the venomous diatribes of Johnstone's *Chrysal* or Churchill's satires. The second century has, it is true, no claim to be ranked among those epochs which have contributed to the intellectual riches of the world; it was an age of decadence and dissolution, but it had its brighter side, and it is precisely this side of it which Lucian and Apuleius have done their utmost to conceal. Some interesting glimpses both of the society and the literary activity of this singular period are to be found amid the rubbish of a work which seems to bear the same relation to classical students as old Burton paradoxically describes himself as bearing to his fellow-creatures—known to few, to still fewer unknown—the *Noctes Atticæ* of Aulus Gellius. The fate of this curious work has few parallels in the annals of literature. From the day when Nicholas of Trèves

exultingly presented the Cardinal Orsini with a fragment of it, at Rome, in the fourteenth century, to the day when Lion insulted scholarship by his atrocious edition at the beginning of the present century, it has never wanted either editors or readers. But editors and readers alike have persisted in regarding it merely as a storehouse of antiquities: they have appreciated it only as a repertory of unique fragments. Its historical value has been unnoticed: its graphic pictures of contemporary society, and the interesting particulars it gives us of the distinguished men who were the last representatives of Greek and Roman culture when Greek and Roman culture attempted to reclaim something of its original purity, have been altogether ignored. So completely has Aulus come to be regarded as the exclusive property of the verbal critic and antiquary, that one of his latest commentators has published an edition carefully weeding out his anecdotes and social sketches. Here and there we find a reader who has extracted amusement from the work. Porson pointed one or two of his jokes from its pages, and Lord Macaulay has recorded the pleasure he took in skimming through its chapters; but no one has yet come forward to give poor Gellius his due as a pleasant gossip and anecdotist as apart from his merits as a verbal critic, as a commentator on points of law, and as an illustrator of Roman antiquities.

As the old gentleman spent some of the happiest moments of his life in settling verbal squabbles, it seems a pity that he was not fated to settle the squabbles which have raged over his own name. Lipsius, Salmasius, and Barthius stoutly contend that he was not named Aulus at all, but that his proper title was Agellius. Aldus, Theodore Gaza, and Lambecius contend for the popular theory—*et adhuc sub judice lis est*. However that may be, he lived under Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius; but he does not appear to have been brought into close contact with any of them, though he held, he informs us, a high legal office at Rome. He was born in the capital, and he belonged probably to a good, certainly to a rich family. He enjoyed the advantage of the expensive and liberal education which the better class of Romans usually did enjoy. He studied rhetoric under Titus Castricius, whom he often mentions with respect; and under Sulpicius Apollinaris, whom he describes as a man of profound erudition. His third teacher was Peregrinus Proteus (who has fallen under the lash of Lucian), a philosopher whose career very pleasantly varies the monotonous respectability of his class. After a youth which had united the tastes of a De Sade to the vicissitudes of a Dermody, he had turned Christian; thence by an easy transition he passed into a cynic. Suddenly presenting himself at Parium, his native town, to the surprise of everybody he proceeded to divide his paternal inheritance among the poor, blushed, we may presume, to find himself famous by such a generous deed, and hid his confusion among the Christians, into whose ranks he once more enrolled himself. Before long, however, he "blasphemously profaned" the sacrament, aggravating the offence by certain other misdemeanours, which have

elicited a smile from Lucian and a groan from Philostratus. For this he was excommunicated, and betook himself to Rome, where his enormities became so inconveniently notorious that he deemed it prudent to retire. It was probably at this point in his career that he delivered the discourse in which he informs his old pupil that a wise man should avoid sin, not, as he is careful to observe, from the fear of punishment, but from his sense of duty and love of virtue (the whole of this excellent man's sermon may be read *Lib. xii. cap. xi.*). Thinking it was now high time to terminate his exemplary life in a way which should immortalise his memory, he proceeded to the Olympic Games, prepared a funeral pyre, lighted it, mounted it, and in the sight of the assembled multitude deliberately burnt himself to death, A.D. 165. The chapter in which Gellius recorded the dignified rebuke given by this great and good man to a young aristocrat for yawning in his presence is unfortunately lost. At what period in his eventful career he numbered Gellius among his pupils and smothered his father is uncertain. That he managed to conceal his frailties is clear, for his simple pupil appears to have been more impressed by the sanctity of his life and the severe morality of his conversation than with his abilities as a rhetorician. Another of young Gellius' tutors was Antonius Julianus, who is described as a Spaniard by birth and accent, but a man of eloquence. He had evidently a taste for gallantry, and a fine ear for verses dedicated to it. We are indebted to his recitations for the preservation of some singularly beautiful lines (see *Lib. xix. cap. ix.*, and *Lib. xx. cap. ix.*), which make it probable that the losses we have sustained in the extinction of early Roman poetry are not confined to the epic and the drama. The verses quoted from Valerius Aedituus and Portius Licinius are indeed scarcely inferior to the fragments of Ibycus or Bacchylides. We recommend them to the notice of young translators who are looking out for "fresh woods and pastures new." It is quite impossible to trace with any certainty the biography of Gellius, though we may read something between the lines of his narrative. It is pretty evident that so far from taking any active part or interest in politics, he regarded them with the sublime or pedantic indifference which Archimedes and Sir Thomas Browne appear to have entertained for them. He was evidently far more interested in squabbles about the principle of the aspirate, and the difference between "morbus" and "vitium," than in the defeat of the Parthians or the pacification of the Brigantes. Of his wife we know nothing; of his children, for whose edification he tells us his book was committed to paper, we know nothing. Works written by literary fathers for the instruction of the home-circle have rarely produced the result they aimed at, and the young Gellii have sunk into the easy obscurity of the graceless Marcus, "littell Lewis" Chaucer and Richard Stanhope. Let us hope they were at least respectable, and ordinarily if impotently grateful to a scribbling father. It is difficult to determine the time at which Gellius set about the composi-

tion or rather the compilation of his work, though we are warranted by internal evidence for supposing that it could not have been before A.D. 143. Some of his editors assert that his death occurred about A.D. 164, though such a statement is purely conjectural, and is not likely to be more than approximately true. At whatever time he quitted the world, he quitted a world which he had evidently enjoyed keenly, and under circumstances more than ordinarily prosperous. An easy fortune, excellent bodily health, warm domestic affections happily centered, and the constant society of men who were socially and intellectually the most distinguished men of their age—must have woven more of the white in the thread of his life than falls to the lot of most men.

Though we know so little of his actual life, his character—and it is that which most interests us now—may be read pretty clearly in the transient but significant glimpses which men of his garrulous simplicity seldom fail consciously or unconsciously to reveal. He was evidently a man of restless curiosity, little discrimination, and catholic sympathies, who spared no pains to inform himself on every subject. There are indeed few topics on which he has not directly or indirectly touched. He had his speculations about the winds and the tides, about the reason of blushing, the effects of fear, and the construction of the œsophagus. He had given some attention to medicine and anatomy, and has propounded theories relative to both which would probably not be appreciated in Wimpole Street. He badgered philosophers about fate and free will, and sophists about the difference between “lying and telling a lie.” An intimate acquaintance with the works of *Ælius Tubero*, *Cæcilius Gallus*, *Servius Sulpicius*, and the early legists, must have made him the terror of the legal profession, for whom he was always ready with puzzles and problems. He had his views about physical science, and he could dogmatise on astrology and magic. He had studied attentively both Greek and Roman history, and he has devoted one of the largest chapters in his work to a synchronic table of the principal events in both, muddled and erroneous enough it must be owned, but proving amply his curiosity and honest love of research. His acquaintance with literature was evidently accurate and discursive, though, like *Lipsius* and *Meursius*, he appears to have contemplated it mainly from a grammatical and antiquarian point of view. His preference was in the true spirit of the grammarian for the older writers. He rarely alludes to that Augustan cycle whose names are so familiar to us. *Horace* he has never mentioned at all, a passing illustration of the singular fact that the favourite of modern Europe was never popular with his countrymen. *Virgil*, however, he probably knew by heart, and he is never weary of praising, illustrating, and quoting him. He has endorsed a foolish piece of hypercriticism about the inaccuracy of the *Ætna* description in the Third *Æneid*, but he makes ample amends elsewhere by pointing out many of the master’s magic touches. Like *Herodotus* and *Pliny*, he appears to have been a man of infinite credulity.

Though unlike the first, he had no poetry in his soul; and unlike the second, he had none of the philosophic instinct which attempts to connect phenomena with principles. Like Ælian, whom he closely resembles, he is full of foolish tales about dolphins in love with beautiful youths, human beings changing their sex, and the like, all of which he seems to hold devoutly true. As was the man, such is his book.

The *Noctes Atticæ* is a sort of commonplace book, in which the author jotted down such passages as had struck him in his reading, and such particulars as he could remember of his contemporaries. It is not so elaborate and methodical as the ponderous collections inflicted on us by the executors of Southey and Mr. Buckle, but it is similar to them in the variety of its subjects and in the abundance of its extracts. The subject-matter is set forth without any attempt at classification. From an interpretation of a clause in the Twelve Tables he will pass on to a pleasant tale about the frailties of Demosthenes or Scipio. Chapters on etymology are mixed up with chapters on monstrous snakes and military crowns. The object with which it was undertaken was, he tells us, twofold; to beguile the dreary winter nights in his villa near Athens—hence its title—and to amuse the children, the young Gellii—hence, we may presume, the dreary jokes with which he is careful to relieve its more solid information. In sympathetic imitation of our original, we shall deal with its subject-matter precisely as its author dealt with it, and give a brief sketch of its contents without regard to order and classification, merely premising that we intend to ignore its grammatical, legal, and etymological information. Cujas and Scaliger may have found that part of it light reading, but in these degenerate days we are fonder of anecdotes and personal traits; and of its anecdotes and personal traits, therefore, we propose to plunder the old gentleman.

Pedantry and humour rarely go together, and as Gellius was a pedant of the first water we shall find his reminiscences more curious than either witty or pointed. As was observed before, Gellius had an honest affection for almost every branch of human knowledge, but there were three things which had an especial attraction for him—grammar in its comprehensive sense, anecdotes, and scandal. At one time we find him wrangling in the field of Agrippa, with two grammarians, about the vocative case of “egregius,” or going on shore at Brundisium, “weary and languid from the pitching of the sea,” to worry a wretched pedant about the meaning of “bidentes.” In an amusing chapter he describes an interview he had at Rome with a celebrated grammarian, whom he went to consult on the word “obnoxius;” and, with all deference to the consultor and consulted, we very much question whether their united knowledge would have saved them from a flogging at Eton or Shrewsbury. Poor Gellius is not a good hand at etymology, and all who are obliged, for editorial purposes, to wade through this the dreariest and largest portion of his work, may indemnify themselves by getting a hearty laugh from the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book, where

even his admirer, Beloe, is obliged to abandon him with a blush. His anecdotes are of a very miscellaneous description. He tells us, for instance, how Democritus fell in with Pythagoras carrying a bundle of sticks, and being struck with his dexterity in binding them together, concluded that the same dexterity, if applied to a higher purpose, might make him a philosopher, took him home, trained him and turned him into the father, or exponent (we decline to discuss that point) of the transmigration theory: how Polus, an Athenian actor, wanting to make a hit in the character of Electra weeping over Orestes, went to the tomb of a beloved son recently dead, brought his ashes on to the stage, and so managed to extract some genuine tears. He records a repartee of Hannibal's, which, in its curt and biting sarcasm, reminds us of Wellington. Antiochus was reviewing his soldiers, richly decked with splendid armour and effeminate ornaments, in the presence of Hannibal, who despised and distrusted such irrelevant trappings. "Can these," he proudly asked the great Carthaginian, "be compared with the Romans? are these enough for them?" "Enough indeed," was the reply; "enough, if the Romans are ever so avaricious." Everybody knows the beautiful tale of "Androcles and the Lion," but everybody does not know that we are indebted to Gellius for its perfect preservation, and for many of the most delightful touches in the story. He tells a good tale of Socrates. That great man was on one occasion visited by Alcibiades, and as Xanthippe was more than usually lively that day, he asked the philosopher why he did not turn her out of doors. "Because by putting up with such a person at home, I accustom and exercise myself to bear the petulance and insults of others abroad," was the meek rejoinder, which recalled, and possibly suggested, our own Hooker's remark under similar circumstances. Varro has observed that the faults of a wife ought either to be removed or tolerated; by removing them you may make a wife more compliant, by enduring them you may improve yourself. As, however, that venerable writer had made a good match, he could afford to philosophise on the subject. In striking contrast to Socrates and Xanthippe, stands Gellius's story of Artemisia and Mausolus. They were so devoted to each other that, when the latter died, his grief-wrung spouse had his bones and ashes beaten up, well spiced, and infused in water. She then—the loving cannibal—proceeded to drink him up, thus oddly realising the modern theory of marriage by becoming very literally one flesh with her adored lord. Well worth reading are the tales of Papirius Prætextatus, who "sold" the Roman matrons so admirably (*Lib. i. cap. xxiii.*), of Sertorius's Stag (*xv. 22*), the suicidal panic which attacked the maidens in Miletus, the beautiful apologue about the lark (*ii. 29*), the tale of the philosopher in the storm (*xix. 1*).

But Gellius figures best in the character of a scandal-monger, and the interest one naturally feels in his stories is sometimes not unminged with indignation at the meddling old gossip for raking up stories which the world would willingly let die, and is all the poorer for possessing. He

has a way of unconsciously debasing, like Bayle, whatever he touches, and leaves, as it were, dirty finger-marks on pages of history which, but for him, would have preserved an unsullied splendour. First, comes his legend about Regulus. Who has not thrilled over the glorious verses in which Horace describes the sublime patriotism of one of Rome's noblest sons; how in his country's interest he pleaded against the policy which would have rescued him from the torturer's hand, and restored him a happy hero to a happy home? Now note Gellius's damaging touch. Regulus, he says, was aware that he had in his veins a deadly poison, which would necessarily, at no distant time, prove fatal, and that he had consequently not much to gain by prolonging for a short period his lease of life: hence his heroic conduct. He asperses the fair fame of Scipio Africanus; and chuckles over some verses of Nævius, which describe a grotesquely discreditable incident in the early life of a hero who was popularly supposed to unite the virtues of Bellerophon to the valour of Manlius. Not satisfied with this, he boldly and joyfully denies, on doubtful authority, the truth of the story relative to a Spanish maiden, with respect to whom Scipio had had the credit of chivalrously consenting to waive the right which conquest gave him. In addition to faithfully chronicling the ordinary stories of Demosthenes's frailties, such as his visit to Lais, his boast to Aristodemus that he had received more for holding his tongue than Aristodemus had for speaking, his "silver-quinsey," his foppishness in dress, and the like, he goes on to insinuate still more abominable charges. He enters into particulars about the private life of the historian Sallust, which were certainly not calculated to do the young Gellii much good. A judicious father would have left them to feed, in unsuspecting admiration, on the saintly paragraphs which open the "Catiline" and the "Jugurtha," without unveiling a really eloquent moralist in the position of the philosopher Square at his weakest moment. The garret of Molly Seagrim and the highest peak of Parnassus are, no doubt, allied nearly enough, but the discovery of their proximity is one of those discoveries which need never be prematurely revealed, especially to the young.

It is a pleasing relief to contemplate Gellius in another character, and to turn to those passages in his work which refer to his illustrious contemporaries, and to the remarkable period in which his lot was cast. It was an oasis of no common verdure in a desert of no common barrenness. The strong hand of Hadrian and the peaceful and judicious policy of the Antonines had succeeded not only in securing a period of political tranquillity, but a period which Gibbon has pronounced to have been the happiest and most prosperous the world has ever known. The bloody tyrants who had butchered Lucan and Seneca, and broken the young heart of Persius; the illiterate ruffians who had banished the philosophers from Rome, and had attempted to sweep the works of Virgil, Horace, and Livy from the shelves of the Aventine and the Palatine, that their own execrable balderdash might supplant them, were now in their dis-

honoured graves. Literature found once more judicious patrons, and long degraded, again revived—not, indeed, in its former creative energy, but strong with that generous enthusiasm for a vanished past which half redeems a decadent age, and reflects on the mere student some of the glory which belongs to his masters. Foremost among these enthusiasts stands Herodes Atticus—the Cosmo of the second century—the Demetrius of the Decadence. He was born at Marathon, in 104, the scion of a princely house, in whose veins ran the blood of the *Æacidae*, and among whose immediate ancestors was the hero of Salamis, the illustrious Miltiades. He had inherited a splendid fortune, but in his devotion to letters he worked with all the energy, and submitted to all the struggles, of a poverty-stricken rhetorician. With such sensitive anxiety had he applied himself when a young man to oratory, that Philostratus tells us he was on the point of flinging himself into the Danube because he had failed in a speech delivered in the presence of Hadrian. Subsequently, however, he opened a school of rhetoric both at Athens and Rome. Among the devoted pupils who thronged his lecture-room and recorded his merits were Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Varus, the sons of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, both of whom were afterwards invested with the purple. He was created consul in 143; he became prefect of the free cities of Asia Minor, and he was president of the Pan-hellenic and Pan-athenaic Games. These splendid offices he adorned and supplemented with splendid munificence. He not only erected a theatre at Athens, a hospital at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Olympia, but he built a marble stadium, he repaired the Odeum of Pericles, and he formed the magnificent project of digging a canal across the Isthmus of Corinth. Gellius speaks of his kindness and courtesy, and remarks of his oratory that in solemnity and copiousness it excelled any oratory with which he was acquainted, and he was acquainted with the masterpieces of Demosthenes and Lysias. At his beautiful villa at Cephisia, near Athens, which “everywhere echoed with the fall of water and the melody of birds,” Aulus tells us he spent many delightful hours sheltered from the heat by spreading groves and with cool fountains flashing round. Every glimpse we get of this illustrious man—we see him unfortunately only by glimpses—has a strange charm. At one time he is nursing his friend Gellius during a temporary illness at Cephisia, or good-naturedly arguing with him in the garden. His lofty and gentlemanly bearing is well illustrated by the following anecdote. He was on one occasion accosted by a quack philosopher, who had come to beg from him, and on being warned by his attendants that the fellow was a low impostor, he said with dignified courtesy, “Let us give this fellow something, whatever he may be, considering our own character, not his;” accordingly he ordered the man to be given money enough to supply him with bread for thirty days. In addition to other particulars scattered up and down the *Attic Nights*, Gellius quotes a singularly beautiful discourse delivered by his accomplished friend relative to the stoical doctrine of apathy, in which Atticus shows that the

suppression of the emotions and passions is little less than the suppression of the most powerful energies of the mind; and that to encourage such apathy is to encourage uselessness and imbecility. Atticus is said to have died at Marathon, A.D. 185, not without having had experience of domestic misfortune in a worthless son, and of public ingratitude in certain charges preferred against him by his own countrymen, who were still true to the worst trait in the Athenian character. Of Cornelius Fronto, also one of the tutors of Marcus Aurelius, and the greatest orator of the second century, we have unfortunately few particulars in the *Attic Nights*, though there is every probability that their author must have been intimately acquainted with him. He resided for some time in the villa formerly occupied by Mæcenas, on the Esquiline, and there in the delightful gardens which had once echoed with the sweet voice of Virgil, and the facetious chit-chat of Horace and Gallus, he loved to assemble his friends. Gellius was indebted to his brilliant and varied conversation for a valuable dissertation on colours (*Lib. ii. 26*), and for certain other pieces of grammatical information more curious perhaps than edifying. He was one of the first of the Purists, and founded the sect of the *Frontoniani*, who bound themselves to avoid the florid diction of contemporary diction, and to adhere to the severe simplicity of the ancient models—a class of men who were, fifteen centuries afterwards, so pleasantly ridiculed by Erasmus, and so faithfully represented by Longolius.

The philosopher, however, who seems to have had most influence on Gellius, and whose opinions he has recorded with a fulness and fidelity which insensibly reminds us of Boswell, was Favorinus. This extraordinary man was born at Arelate, in Gaul, and, if we are to believe Philostratus, he was an hermaphrodite. He appears to have been on terms of the closest intimacy with most of the leading men of the day, and to have found a life of severe study not incompatible with less creditable pursuits. Byron used to boast of three things—that he could swim four miles, that he could snuff a candle out six times consecutively with a pistol at twelve paces, and that he could write a poem of which thirty thousand copies had been sold in a week. Favorinus had also his three boasts, which he was fond of airing on occasion—that he was a native of Gaul, but that he could write and speak the purest Greek; that he had quarrelled with an emperor (Hadrian), and had kept his head upon his shoulders; and that in spite of his unfortunate position, he had had his *bonnes fortunes*. Of his literary merits we are unfortunately not in a position to judge for ourselves, as none of his works have been preserved in their entirety; what we have, we have only as scattered fragments in Stobæus. Gellius and Philostratus, however, both agree in saying that he was one of the most eloquent men of his age. So expressive were his features, so perfect his pronunciation, and so exquisite the modulation of his voice, that, when he declaimed in Greek, hundreds would hang entranced on his oratory who could not understand one word of the language

in which it was clothed. He was acquainted with Plutarch, to whom he dedicated a treatise; and with Herodes Atticus, for whom he had so strong an affection that he bequeathed to him his library, his house at Rome, and his favourite slave. Though we have next to nothing of his works—which is probably no great loss—we have much of his conversation; and as a conversationalist he must certainly rank very high. He is, indeed, by far the most striking character in the *Noctes Atticæ*. The parallel between Gellius and Boswell may be a little fanciful, for in many important points the two men stand in striking contrast to each other; but the parallel between Johnson and Favorinus as talkers is singularly close. The strong common sense, at once shrewd and limited, which characterises his remarks on astrology (Lib. xiv. 1), on the office of a judge (xiv. 2), the dialectical skill evinced by him in his argument on the shore at Ostia about happiness (xvii. 1), his love of paradox (xvii. 10), and of talking for effect (xvii. 12), his conversational dogmatism, versatility, and readiness—all these he has in common with the Socrates of Fleet Street. His wooden, but sensible criticism on Virgil (xvi. 10), is the exact counterpart of Johnson's remarks on Gray, and on Milton's minor poems. The words in which the simple and appreciative Gellius describes the fascinations of his hero almost anticipate a paragraph of Boswell. "His enchanting conversation completely entranced me, and I attended him wherever he went, charmed, as it were, by the magic of his tongue, so much did he delight me on all occasions with his discourse." What Boswell says of his hero's love of paradox is singularly parallel to the expressions of Gellius when he notes the same characteristic in the distinguished Gaul. "Even Favorinus often expressed himself in these paradoxes, either because he thought them peculiarly adapted for the exercise of his genius, or because he wished to practise subtleties and subdue difficulties by use." Like his English counterpart, he would never confess himself at a loss and would trust to his intellectual acuteness to supply on the spur of the moment from shrewd conjecture what he wanted in accurate technical information. His theory, for instance, of the causes of hunger (Lib. xvi. 3), may be compared with Johnson's "wide solutions;" to borrow a phrase from Sir Thomas Browne—of points in natural history. Nor is he less remarkable for his common sense, couched in pithy and incisive language, as where he advises a foolish young man who affected antique phraseology to imitate the moderns in his language and the ancients in his life; or when he remarks that great truths often lose their value simply because they are spoken without sufficient regard to time and place. Pope, by the way, has borrowed and illustrated his observation about it being far worse for a man to be coldly praised than to be vehemently attacked. There is a good deal about this interesting man in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, a book which has neither been read nor praised so much as it deserves. The time and manner of Favorinus' death are alike unknown, but it is probable that he lived to a good old

age; and it is certain that he died in easy circumstances, as he was enabled to leave a magnificent legacy to his friend Herodes Atticus.

Many other figures appear dimly and fitfully in the varied pages of this strange old gossip, peeping furtively out of darkness to vanish into darkness again. He has somehow the power, so effective because so unconscious, of lighting up for a moment the infinite wastes of the Past, and of throwing up in striking relief on its gloomy background scenes and figures which have long faded into chaos. His quiet evening, for instance, with Julius Celsinus at the seat of their friend Paulus, on the Vatican Hill, with the mild autumnal sunset melting into twilight round them as they recited and discussed the *Alcestis* of Lævius, is a picture which comes with a strange charm through the mists of nearly two thousand years, fresh and beautiful and touching. One would like to have known more of the hospitable Taurus, whose visit to a sick friend and whose eloquent dissertation on pain are so graphically described; and of the Athenian lad, "very lively and full of the spirits natural to his age, and the wit which belongs to his country," who set the philosopher and honest Gellius by the ears on the question of the freezing of oil all long, long ago *cinis, ossa—nihil*. Very pleasing, too, are the glimpses we get of Sulpicius Apollinaris, his old tutor, "a man in the memory of all of us pre-eminently learned," who facetiously draws out a pedant on the meaning of a passage in Sallust. The "ferocious and churlish" Domitius would, we somehow feel, have made himself more agreeable at a modern dinner-table than he did to Gellius and Favorinus near the temple of Carmentis, for is not the moonlight of memory falling softly now over his rough lineaments? Which of us would not wish to have heard Antonius Julianus reciting, "with his head modestly covered," and "with a very sweet voice," the delicious love verses which close the ninth chapter of the nineteenth book? The poet Ammianus, another *nomen et præterea nihil*, who comes pleasantly associated with an oyster supper and an interesting discussion, has vanished, a shadow into shadow; and we, too, must vanish, happy and satisfied if these words of ours shall induce anyone to turn over the neglected pages of the *Noctes Atticæ*.

J. C. C.

On the Decay of Fine Manners.

It is scarcely necessary to occupy ourselves with the demonstration that the manners of the community have, during the present century, undergone a serious change for the worse. Their deterioration is a matter of notoriety and universal comment, and the unanimity with which this conclusion is affirmed acquits us of the obligation of proving it. Nor, supposing the point to be contested, would it be an easy matter to establish it. How are you to prove that manners have deteriorated? Manner is so impalpable a thing that there is no crucible in which it can be impounded, no scales, be they ever so fine, in which it can be weighed.

But while we fully recognise the practical impossibility of proving that the manners of society are not as good as they once were, there is not the same difficulty in showing how they have come to suffer degradation. Assuming, then, that the prevalent opinion on the subject is a correct one, let us see if we cannot account more or less clearly for the fact it deploras.

Wherein consist good manners? I think it will be found that the secret or essence of good manners, as of goodness in all other things, consists in suitableness, or in other words of harmony. When we speak of harmony, we necessarily imply a relation between two things. We signify that the relation between them is what it should be; that the just proportion between them has been observed; and that out of this justness of proportion, this relation as it should be, springs what is designated by the significant word propriety.

What is manner? Manner is the deportment of one individual to another; which is as much as to say, the outward and phenomenal relation of one individual to another. Now, every person—if we make exception of Monarchs—can stand towards other people in three distinct social relations. You may be the superior of the person you are speaking to, you may be his equal, or you may be his inferior; and I venture to affirm that your manner will be good or bad according as it recognises or fails to observe the fact in each case, respectively. I am not addressing myself to those persons who avow themselves insensible to subtle distinctions, and whose only notion of distinction between one manner and another is that it is vulgar or the reverse, polite or the opposite. I address myself to those who make the complaint that fine manners have suffered decay, and who are alive to all the infinite shades and gradations of which a really fine manner is susceptible.

And, firstly, as regards the deportment of a person of fine manners to

his superior. In this there will be a standing deference, but never a shade of servility ; and the inclination of tone, gesture, and language will be as slight, as natural, as graceful, but as perceptible to an observant eye and ear, as the movement say, of a weeping willow in a light breeze. Suppose that two persons are conversing, and a third enters. The third ought to be able to tell at once which is the superior, and which the inferior, supposing the distinction to exist, and though the distinction be by no means a strongly marked one. Ask him how he knows ; and he can no more tell you how, than one can say why one face is beautiful and another is not, or than a neuralgic subject can say, save by his own impressions, that there is brewing a thunder-storm. The superiority I speak of may be one either of rank, age, or acquired distinction ; but a well-bred person, a person of fine manners, never fails to give it recognition. A man of thirty, who comports himself to a man of seventy as he would to a person of his own age, is wanting in this instinct, and is as much a clown as is one who addresses a woman with the familiarity he employs towards a man. What constitutes good manners in this case is, as I have observed, the maintenance of a just proportion, in plainer language, of a proper distance, between the two people ; in other words, the preservation of harmony. The neglect of a just relation makes impropriety or discord.

Quite as subtle but quite as certain a line will mark off the superior from the inferior ; though perhaps the distance is created rather by the inferior than by the superior, and by the obligation the latter feels himself under to accept the situation laid down by the other. Here again an absolute stranger ought to find quick indications of the relative position of the two, though he might be sorely put to it to give an account of the faith which is in him.

The relation of equal to equal might, at first sight, seem to be a much simpler matter. On the contrary, I take it to be considerably more complex. For there are more faults that can be committed in this last of the three relations than in either of the other two. The only mistake an inferior, deficient in fine manners, is likely to commit in dealing with his superior, is to act as though he were the latter's equal ; and the only danger to which the superior is subject, in conversing with his inferior, is the danger of asserting, or over-asserting, his superiority, instead of leaving it to the other to establish the fact by insensibly conceding it. But your equal obviously can commit either blunder. He may be arrogant and presuming, or he may show himself apologetic, timid, and uneasy. Either blunder serves to introduce an element of awkwardness and discomfort into the conversation, and, if the blunder be one of large proportions, renders the situation intolerable. You may have your bumptious cad, or your cringing cad. It is difficult to say which is the more insufferable. At last the horrible discrepancy between what you have a right to expect, and what as a fact you encounter, becomes so trying, that it "gives on your nerves," like bells jangled and out of tune.

The discord is excruciating. The fellow has violated the laws of harmony. He knows nothing about the just proportion or fitness of things. Suitableness is to him a word without a meaning, and his life is one long unconscious impropriety.

If this analysis of the essence or kernel of good manners and bad manners be correct, it is not difficult to explain why manners should have deteriorated so strikingly during the last forty or fifty years. I must ask the reader to be good enough not to conclude, because I venture to point out what I believe to be the cause of this deterioration, that I have a political or even a social grudge against the cause, or that I am hostile to all the effects it has produced. I am merely seeking for a *vera causa* of the decline of fine manners, and have no *arrière pensée* whatever, either political, social, or religious. A thing is not bad altogether because it induces certain unfortunate results. It is of the nature of nothing human to confer unalloyed benefits; and though fine manners may be a precious possession, and their decay a just theme for lamentation, they are not the most precious of all possessions, and there are other gifts with which we could even less satisfactorily dispense.

It will not be disputed that it is considerably easier for people to comport themselves properly and justly towards their superiors, towards their inferiors, and towards their equals, when they know who their superiors, who their inferiors, and who their equals are, than when they do not, but are left to ascertain the point as best they may, or to settle it by an effort of their own. Now the time was when no man in England could be in doubt upon the point. There existed a sliding-scale in the social hierarchy; and the precise tariff of deference which was required by one man to another, was as clearly ascertained as the number of inches in a mile, the amount of gills in a quart, or the quantity of firkins in a kilderkin. It must be obvious that this greatly simplified the matter; indeed, that it rendered it quite as simple as to ascertain the current price of native wheat, or the market figure of Flemish wool. From the Sovereign downwards, there was a gradation of ranks, titles, and position; ending, as far as gentlemen were concerned, with the small country squire. It was the habit, the instinct, and in no slight measure the law, of the time, to recognize this gradation; and any man received, and paid, the exact amount of homage and deference custom prescribed.

We have still a Monarch. We have still Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Barons, Baronets, Knights, Esquires, and—gentlemen. But what is a gentleman? No one can any longer answer the question. There are many persons indisputably gentlemen; there are others who hope they are gentlemen; others, again, who are trying hard to become such, or be recognized as such. In plain parlance, there are a number of people who are labouring to assert themselves, and who are going through life with no fixed and definite position in it, but are perpetually seeking to become that person's equal, and that other's superior.

How is it possible that such people should have fine manners, or

manners at all? They are certain to be bumptious and presuming; it is possible they may, on occasion, be servile likewise, for they are perpetually "trying it on." When they find themselves in the society of persons whom they can hardly help suspecting to be their superiors in breeding and education, they strive straight-off to annihilate the distinction they know to exist by putting on what they consider the manners of an equal. The "putting on" of this manner is, as might have been expected, a disastrous failure. They only become contemptible or offensive, or both. They parade their inferiority by the very effort to drape it; and their natural superior turns from them with disgust, and a determination never, if possible, to consort with them again.

The treatment by this class of persons of their inferiors is not more happy than their address towards their superiors, or towards those who would willingly be considered their equals, if their manners entitled them to the right of equality. There are no persons so quick to distinguish a true gentleman from a pinchbeck one as those who are called the lower orders. This is so, at least, in rural parts; the yokel not having lost his partly primitive, partly traditional instincts in the matter, by seeing more than one kind of manner reputed gentlemanlike, and never having had his discrimination confused by the practical ambiguities concerning good manners, engendered in towns. Your gamekeeper, coachman, groom, stable-help, gardener, watcher, odd-man, tells almost at a glance what "sort of customer" he has to deal with. Each master may be kind, either may be cold and "stand-off;" but there is a world of difference between the familiarity of the gentleman, and the familiarity of the man who would like to be a gentleman; and there is nothing in common between the tone of command of the one, and the orders of the other.

There may have been seen, any night we believe during the past twelvemonth, a piece at a well-known London theatre, in which the manners of gentfolk and people rich but not gentle are supposed to be depicted and contrasted. The piece has been most successful. I could scarcely wish for more conclusive proof that fine manners have decayed. An audience sensitive to the difference between fine manners and clumsy manners would have turned away with contempt from an exhibition of vulgarity on the part of gentfolk and non-gentfolk alike, of the most extravagant kind. It is perfectly true that thousands of persons whose manners are not "fine," are admitted into society supposed to be constituted of gentlemen, and to a certain extent justly supposed to be so constituted. But, in the play in question, the vulgarity of the vulgar is of that outrageous and incredible kind that requires to be seen to be credited. No person who had the faintest notion what fine manners are would suppose that he had found a foil for them in what we should imagine to be a caricature of the manners of Billingsgate or Margate; and no person similarly endowed could witness the performance without pity and annoyance. We do see fine manners caricatured every day

of the week; but we see the spectacle off the stage, and with the absolute unconsciousness of the chief performers.

It has frequently been observed that modern manners are too familiar. This is but to say briefly what we have said more at large, to state the fact without analysing it. A person of fine manners is never familiar with his superiors, even ostensibly; never familiar with his inferiors in reality, and not often familiar even with his equals. Horse-play is an extreme type of familiarity, and should be the exclusive amusement of country bumpkins and gutter-children. It is a subject for much regret that this coarse kind of diversion has been found delightful by some of those who are called "the highest in the land." To pull a man out of bed in the middle of the night; to throw his bed-clothes or the contents of his portmanteau out of window on to the lawn; to lock up a gentleman and a lady in the billiard-room at one in the morning, and put out the lights; these and such like performances have been deemed the height of polite enjoyment in more than one country house of ancient dignity and modern notoriety. I observe that a stand is being made against this sort of thing by the wiser and better-bred portion of society, in spite of its having received very august countenance.

The familiarity to which we have incidentally alluded is doubtless an extravagant form of the declension of good manners; but it will be found that excessive familiarity runs through our manners generally, and that to it must be ascribed the decline. People, having forgotten how to comport themselves properly to their superiors—perhaps not being willing to recognise that they have any—soon lose the secret of how to behave towards their equals.

But, perhaps, one of the most lamentable, if not the most marked feature in the decay of fine manners, is to be observed in the change which has come over the manner of men towards women, or let me say, for fear I should be misunderstood, of gentlemen towards ladies. We will not conjure a storm of remonstrance by presuming to decide who "first began it." But we need not be afraid to say that, even supposing it was men who first led the decline down the path of excessive familiarity, women have so affably followed their lead, that it has become exceedingly difficult for a man to preserve with some women that distance which every well-bred person feels, and every thoughtful person must grant, is indispensable to the maintenance in society of the due relations of the sexes. When a woman playfully tells you you are a "pig," and addresses you with exquisite humour, "Oh, you beast!" it is difficult to observe towards her that fineness of manner which you imagined was her due. If she may call you by such affectionate names, what may you not call her in turn? Why should you trouble yourself to be decorous in the presence of a person to whom decorum is apparently of so little moment? Why should you not swear, loll, expectorate—if you like, go to sleep? Why should you hand her a chair, if she wants one? She probably tells you, "I can get it myself." Why should you not take her

at her word? Why rise when she rises? You are tired, or at any rate you find it inconvenient. It is a "nuisance" to have to "put oneself about so" for women; and certainly when women cease to thank you for doing so, one of the motives for suffering inconvenience has passed away. This is no question of morals. I dare say women are as good as ever they were. I believe they are. But their manners are indisputably decaying. They no longer silently exact that deference from men which is every woman's natural right, and which no sagacious woman ever forfeits. She will not long receive it, even if she hankers after it, from her "pig" and her "beast." The consequence is that men "swagger" in the presence of women to a degree that even the women we speak of find offensive. They have corrupted men's manners; and then they complain of the corruption. *Corruptio optimi pessima est*; and there is nothing so sad as lack of fine manners in a gentleman, except the lack of them in a lady.

In the deference which every woman should exact and every man either instinctively or cheerfully concede, we may perhaps catch the indications of the answer to be made to a possible objection. It might be objected, in these days, that it is not agreeable, and is even humiliating, to have to recognise superiority in others, especially when the superiority does not rest upon virtue, but upon purely artificial qualifications. But the recognition of a something due to women, and equally to old age, which a man of fine feeling, no less than of fine manners, should feel, surely puts us upon the trace of a reply to this objection. No one feels humiliated by deferring to a woman, or to a person much older than himself. If it be answered that such deference is paid to their weakness, and is on that account not humiliating, we respond—waiving the extraordinary cynicism of the argument to which we reply—that in that case a weak man need not defer to a strong woman, and also that, as a matter of fact, many persons who are much older than oneself are likewise much stronger. Young men do not defer to their fathers solely out of consideration for their fathers' failing powers. It is a sense of propriety which leads them to be deferential to both parents alike, to the one who is weak, and to the other who is strong. Absolutely artificial superiority, no doubt, is willingly recognized by no one; but while, as a rule, conventional superiority does represent some sort of real superiority, the truly wise man does not refuse to concede a slight shade of deference to superiority merely artificial, provided it is of the sort that is bound up with the general constitution and machinery of the body politic and social. A man would be a fool as well as a clown who, being a commoner, objected to a peer taking precedence of him in so trivial a matter as taking the hostess into dinner. Yet the commoner might well be a great astronomer or dazzling orator, and the peer the greatest numskull that ever walked on two legs. When an astronomical question came to be discussed, or an after-dinner speech had to be made, such a peer would fall into the background, and the superiority of the

commoner would in turn obtain recognition. Indeed, fine manners depend upon "trifles light as air;" but nothing is too trifling for the consideration of the great poet or artist, and nothing too trifling for the fine art of the perfect gentleman.

There is yet another element in modern life which is radically hostile to the cultivation or even the retention of fine manners. This is its extreme hurry and its constant bustle. Fine manners require calm grace; and calm grace is not easily preserved amid the hubbub, jostling, and anxiety of the existence of to-day. Fine manners require time; indeed, they take no note of time. A person of fine manners may himself always be punctual; but he can scarcely preserve his fine manners while labouring to compel other people to be so. Fine manners are absolutely incompatible with fussiness. Fine manners take their time over everything. This is not to say that they are inconsistent with exertion or even with great energy. But the exertion must be equable; the energy must be uniform, not spasmodic or hysterical. Watch different orders of persons proceeding to take the train from one place to another. Persons of an inferior condition of life appear to be deeply tormented with the idea that they will fail to catch it. They arrive out of breath, though they are ten minutes before the time fixed for starting. They bustle over the taking of their tickets; they scramble for a place in some carriage or other; the whole business is with them one of haste and disquietude. People of a higher grade, but still of what is ordinarily termed a middle condition of life, do not manifest so much incoherent solicitude as all this. But they are fidgety and uncertain. They trouble themselves and their neighbours, instead of taking the matter quietly and as a matter of course. People of fine manner do not exhibit these symptoms of gratuitous distress. They take all reasonable care to be at the station in time, but as they cherish an immovable belief that five minutes are always and invariably of the same length, and that the hour-hand moves no faster even if their own pulse does, they are content to abide by the law of cause and consequence, and entertain no doubt that having given themselves an abundant interval for traversing a well-ascertained distance, it will be accomplished in the period duly allotted to it. There is perfect repose in the taking of their tickets, in the dispatch of their baggage, in the selection of their places. Persons who do not understand that this method of procedure is a second nature with many, and a first nature with some, half-playfully denominate those they see practising it as "cool hands." But where in the world is there any necessity for heat, or for that feverish trepidation which accompanies the smaller movements of people who have not learned, to use a not inapt phrase to be met with in a modern poem, that there is nothing so tedious as haste?

Much might yet be said upon the subject of fine manners and their decay; but an essay had better be suggestive by its brevity than wearisome by its exhaustiveness. But there is one point I must not omit to notice. Many excellent persons, not unnaturally displeased to find that

such importance is attached to a quality which seems in no degree to partake of a moral character, labour to argue that the secret of gentlemanliness and fine manners is virtue, generosity, amiability, consideration for others. It seems to me that though the argument may prove that he who employs it has a noble enthusiasm for morality, he allows his worthy partiality to lead him into sophistry, or at least to lose sight of a true distinction, and one that goes to the root of the whole business. I do not think I should be guilty of exaggeration were I to affirm that some persons of the finest manners have been uniformly and systematically selfish, and that it is possible to perform the most ungracious act in the most graceful manner conceivable. Fine manners are paper-money, not sterling coin; but they are invaluable as currency, whether they be convertible or not into something more solid. But surely the severest moralist would not deny that the most abandoned scoundrel may offer you a chair with the finest air of breeding, though he has just with equal grace deprived someone else of it who stood infinitely more in need of it, while a model of virtue and self-sacrifice may hand it you with such awkwardness as to bruise your shins or tear your dress, though he has been standing the whole night and is almost fainting from fatigue. This, no doubt, is an extreme though by no means an uncommon case; but it is a fortunate circumstance that the tradition of fine manners and the resolution not to part with them often compel a thoroughly selfish man to seem to do a generous thing and in any case to be of use to his neighbour. The worst condition in which we can find ourselves is to be surrounded by people who have neither morals nor manners; who are at one and the same time thoroughly selfish and utterly ill-bred. Society had perhaps better take care lest it fall a victim to the double evil.

The Curé's Progress.

MONSIEUR the Curé down the street

Comes with his kind old face,—

With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,

And his green umbrella-case.

You may see him pass by the little "*Grande-Place*,"

And the tiny "*Hôtel-de-Ville*;"

He smiles as he goes, to the *fleuriste* Rose,

And the *pompier* Théophile.

He turns, as a rule, through the "*Marché*" cool, where the

Where the noisy fish-wives call;

And his compliment pays to the "*belle Thérèse*,"

As she knits in her dusky stall.

There's a letter to drop at the locksmith's shop,

And Toto, the locksmith's niece,

Has jubilant hopes, for the Curé gropes

In his tails for a *pain d'épice*.

There's a little dispute with a merchant of fruit,

Who is said to be heterodox,

That will ended be with a "*Ma foi, oui!*"

And a pinch from the Curé's box.

There is also a word that no one heard

To the furrier's daughter too;

And a pale cheek fed with a flickering red,

And a "*Bon Dieu garde M'sieu!*"

But a grander way for the *Sous-Préfet*,

And a bow for Ma'am'selle Anne;

And a mock "off-hat" to the Notary's cat,

And a nod to the Sacristan:—

For ever through life the Curé goes

With a smile on his kind old face,—

With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,

And his green umbrella-case.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Can we separate Animals from Plants?

WHEN the representative poet of the Lake School ventured to affirm it as his belief

. that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes,

he might be thought, in the opinion of most persons, to have ventilated an opinion of poetic beauty no doubt, but one much too transcendental and improbable for either popular or scientific belief. It is, however, both curious and instructive to note that the progress of science, and more especially the rapid march of investigation within recent years, has placed Wordsworth's "faith" on a perfectly sure basis, and has in fact transformed a poetic thought into a dictum of natural science. The idea of the impossibility of drawing clear and absolute lines of distinction between the animal and plant worlds may possibly be received with doubt or may be rejected altogether by those unaccustomed to note the signs of the times in matters scientific. To affirm, as a matter of scientific certainty, that the one side of living nature is not separable from the other by any tests known to us, may appear to be a procedure which not even the *imprimatur* of authority can justify. That, on the other hand, there exist certain grounds for the expression of such a belief, may be readily shown; and in what follows we may attempt to explain the difficulties which beset the entire subject of the distinctions which one may imagine capable of being drawn between the animal and its plant-neighbour.

A point of distinction between animals and plants which might appear to be one of the most stable and fixed, is that founded on the belief that plants possess no sense allied to the nervous perceptions of animals. That a flower should "feel" any sensation whatever, not to speak of "pain," when a careless hand has riven the petals from its stalk, or sharply sundered the blossom from its parent stem, appears to be a proposition of unwarrantable kind. The most ardent of anti-vivisectionists, or the most tender-hearted of ordinary mortals to whom pain is a great and ever-present reality, would naturally regard without a pang of remorse the operations of a gardener, who, armed with scissors, amputated his subjects at will; or the acts of the hedger and ditcher, who, with pruning-hook, ruthlessly slashes a hedge into proportions of symmetrical kind. Not a sigh or a groan escapes the vegetable creation. Travailing and pain appear to be unknown and undreamed of within its limits; and a garden or forest may therefore, in the popular estimation, be regarded as a huge repository of life wherein the tide of a dull, passive existence, destitute of all sensation, rolls silently along.

If, however, we step "forth into the light of things," and regard the plant from a mere intimate and philosophic point of view, we may speedily find occasion to modify the opinions which the superficial survey of the vegetable world has tended to evolve. Let us turn for a moment to the lower borders of the animal world, and inquire how feeling, sensation, or the property of nervousness is therein subserved. The functions of a nervous system may be simply but correctly expressed in the statement, that through its action the living being is brought into relation with its surroundings. The higher the nervous system, the more delicate and perfect is the relationship brought about between the living form and its environments. The lower we proceed in the animal series, the feebler do the nervous functions and manifestations become; and at first sight it appears somewhat hard to believe that the irregular movements of an animalcule, and its ill-defined actions in the seizure of food, are related in any degree with the purposive and definite acts of the higher being. Great as is the transition between the higher animals with their complex nervous systems, and the low animalcule—whose body, consisting of a speck of living jelly, shows no traces of organs of any kind—they may nevertheless be shown to be closely connected parts of an unbroken sequence in the chain of life. Their community becomes clear when we discover the similarity of purpose served by the nervous system of the one and by the indefinite acts of the other; and their differences in this respect, and in others to be hereafter mentioned, are seen to be differences not of kind, but merely of degree. The acts whereby the higher animal secures its food and nourishes its frame, and which depend on the workings of complicated systems of organs, do not surpass in reality the apparently simple action whereby the animalcule engulphs a food-particle within its soft and shapeless body. If anything, the balance of complexity is on the side of the animalcule, which feels without nerves, digests without a stomach, and utilises the primitive substance of its body in all the affairs and concerns of its life.

Is this sensitiveness, apparently universal in the animal world, altogether unrepresented in the plant creation? A short ramble, in imagination, through the garden of a philosophic botanist will furnish materials for a reply to this query. Here, for example, is the common wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), known to every school-boy of botanical tastes, with its symmetrical three-bladed leaves, which have procured for it in the minds of some Hibernian patriots the reputation of being the veritable shamrock itself. The three leaflets in the wood-sorrel are borne at the extremity of the leaf-stalk. At mid-day, and when the rays of the sun fall directly on the leaflets, the organs are seen to lie flat and expanded, with their edges in contact. If at this period we tap the leaf-stalk smartly, or shake the plant, each leaflet will be seen to fold upon itself in a gradual fashion, but with so deliberate a motion that no doubt can be entertained of our stimulation having been the cause of the shrinking. Ultimately the leaves will be found to depend in a loose

manner from the stem; and if we watch the *Oxalis* at the decline of day, we may see a like action of leaf-closure to follow upon the approach of darkness. Of a much more definite character is the irritability displayed by the compound leaves of the sensitive plants (*Mimosa*), the praises of which Shelley has sung in his flowing rhythm. The main leaf-stalk in the mimosa gives off four divisions, each bearing a double row of little leaflets. When allowed to remain at rest and undisturbed in the day-time, the leaflets are expanded, but when darkness approaches the leaflets droop and become folded together, and the main leaf-stalk itself falls downwards in an attitude of rest. Thus 'true is it, as Shelley has said, that the sensitive plant

. opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

More important, however, is it for us to note that the same results follow after the sensitive plant has been artificially stimulated. When we touch the leaf, or tap some of the leaflets only, the latter structures will become huddled together on their stalks, and the main leaf-stalk will droop as before and as if in terror and alarm; whilst after all sense of irritation may be presumed to have passed away, the leaf-stalk will raise itself, and the leaflets become once more expanded. The mimosa is, moreover, found to be sensitive to stimulation of a kind known to affect the animal organisation. The contact of certain chemical substances with the leaflets produces contraction, and electricity produces the same effect. More curious still is the fact that the plant on being exposed to the vapour of chloroform, exhibits at first its usual symptoms of irritation, whilst a prolonged exposure to this influence causes, as in animals, complete insensibility to outward impressions; the plant remaining in a narcotised state, with expanded and non-sensitive leaflets. Not less remarkable is the fact that with the sensitive plant, as with man himself, habit and custom appear to render it less sensitive to stimulation. The jolting of a coach produced at first in the mimosa all the symptoms of irritability, but as if it had become accustomed to the motion, the leaflets soon expanded themselves, and remained for the rest of the journey in a stable and extended condition.

In the *Dionaea muscipula*, or "Venus' fly-trap," the irritability of plants is, perhaps, more plainly exemplified than in the preceding illustrations, whilst the purpose served by the sensitiveness of the *Dionaea* is also plainly apparent. The leaves of the Venus' fly-trap possess very broad stalks, and the leaf-blade is also greatly expanded, and is divided in the middle by a kind of hinge, permitting the leaf to fold in two upon itself. The leaf-margins are also deeply cut, so as to fringe the blade with a set of prominent filaments. When the *Dionaea* leaf is expanded, we may perceive three filaments projecting from the surface of each half; and when any one of these organs is touched the halves of the leaf become folded together. That the purpose of this action is clearly

associated with the capture of insects, is apparent from the fact that in the closed condition of the plant unfortunate members of the insect-class may be found to be retained, and to be undergoing a literal process of dissolution and digestion. When an insect stumbles unwittingly against the hairs of the broad-leaf surface which, as it lies spread open so temptingly appears to invite the animal to rest upon it, the leaf closes on the victim. If the insect is of small size it will make its escape between the interstices of the filaments that fringe the leaf-margin, and which are gradually being interlocked like the teeth of a rat-trap; the plant being thus saved the profitless labour and trouble of digesting so small a morsel. But if the insect is of tolerable size, its efforts to escape between the filaments will serve simply to stimulate the plant to a greater degree of action, and cause it to enclose its victim the more speedily in this veritable "iron cage" of Nature's invention.

Of the sensitiveness of many other plants we may not speak in detail, and the brief mention of several other cases of plant irritability will serve to conclude our preliminary observations on the latter subject. The *Hedysarum gyrans*, or "Moving Plant" of India, has a large leaflet which in the light moves with an oscillating motion from side to side, and two small leaflets, which in the darkness as well exhibit a continual jerking motion. Many of our common plants may be said to illustrate a low or diffuse sensitiveness in an equally plain manner. The familiar daisies—the "flowres white and rede" of Chaucer—close their florets on the approach of twilight, and the marigolds similarly guard their blossoms from the evening's chill. The sun-flowers still turn towards the sun in some degree, even if it be admitted that their interest in the direction of the solar rays is less marked than was formerly supposed—nay, even the plain and common-place fact that plants grow and flourish in situations where they can most readily obtain the genial heat of the sun, appears to form an argument in favour of the general sensitiveness of the plant world.

How may these facts of plant sensibility be explained? is a question which naturally follows upon the consideration of the preceding cases. The only answer which will in any degree satisfy the inquiring mind will require to be founded upon some sufficient explanation of the causes of the sensitiveness in question. Unfortunately the highest penetration of the botanist, aided as he is by the improved appliances of microscopic research, has failed as yet to detect in plants the slightest traces of a nervous system. No structures approaching to, or suggestive of nerves, have been found within the confines of the plant-economy, and hence the observer might be tempted to dismiss the question of nerves and no nerves with a negative reply as far as the plant is concerned; whilst the idea of plant-sensibility being in any way related to the nervousness of animals, might similarly be consigned to the limbo of fancy and improbability. But where physical demonstration fails us, we are entitled to employ the inductive method in the search after truth. Analogy, if

not always to be depended upon as an unerring guide, may, nevertheless, be accepted as a valuable helpmate in research; and in the present instance we shall find that analogy and induction together will go very far to assist us in forming a reasonable comprehension of the question at issue. Turning to the consideration of the sensitiveness of plants for a single moment, we may remark on the entire agreement of the appearances and symptoms of their nervousness with that of animals at large. The act of a sensitive plant which droops its leaflets on being touched, or the action of a "Venus' fly-trap" in the quick closure of its leaves under stimulation, are in truth explicable on no other grounds than on a belief that the plants "feel." It is by no means necessary for the reception or support of such an opinion that any approach to "consciousness" or to allied states should be associated with such sensation on the part of plants. We must indeed be very careful to regard consciousness as an unnecessary condition in plant-sensation, and, as we shall presently learn, in the nervous acts of many animals also. There is an entire and perfect correspondence between the start of the animal on being touched and the dropping of a mimosa leaf. Whilst in the case of the Venus' fly-trap and in its capture of insects, the adaptation of sensitiveness to the wants of its life and to the plant's nutrition, is as strongly suggestive of true nervous irritability as is the act of a sea-anemone which captures and devours the crab that has stumbled against its outspread tentacles. The physiologist need wish for no more complete analogy, in short, than that presented by the case of these highly sensitive plants and most of their animal neighbours, and he looks in vain for any fact which shall justify the idea that the irritability of plants and the nervousness of animals are separated by differences of kind.

The case for the uniformity and similar origin of irritability in animals and plants becomes strengthened very considerably when we investigate more closely the relations and nature of nervousness in lower animals. The contention that feeling and sensation are the exclusive property of the animal can be justified only on the assumption that in all animals there exist the means—namely, nerves—for exercising sensation. This belief, natural enough in its way, receives direct contradiction and flat denial from the avowal of the zoologist that many animals, including some by no means of the lowest grade, utterly fail to show the slightest traces of nerves. The very lowest animals, the bodies of which consist of a uniform matter—the "protoplasm" of the biologist—exhibit, as has already been remarked, no traces of any organs whatever. The task of finding nerves in the body of a low animalcule, which, despite its lowness of grade, can be proved to be a true animal as far as all its functions are concerned, is simply hopeless. Yet such a being not only "feels" when a particle of food touches the margin of its body, but acts upon the "information received," and engulphs and digests the morsel. A colony of "bell-animalcules," supported each on a delicate stalk, will shrink in terror and alarm into a shapeless mass when the observer taps

the slide of glass on which they are supported for observation under the microscope. These animalcules possess no nerves and are moreover destitute of all the structures which are the natural heritage of ordinary animals; yet that observer would be accounted something worse than foolhardy who would either deny their sensitiveness, or who would suggest that it was of essentially different nature from that exhibited by higher animals. The jelly-fishes, which every seaside observer knows so well, may be seen to exhibit the highest degree of sensibility to light, especially around the margin of the bell-shaped body. When any part of the body is touched, the central mouth supported on its stalk is moved toward the irritated point, and thus invariably indicates the part which has been touched. If a cross-cut be made in the soft body of the jelly-fish so as to break the continuity of the track along which the irritability or nerve-impulse travels, the central mouth will move in an erratic fashion when the sensitive margin of the body is touched, as if in uncertainty regarding the exact quarter from which the stimulus has come. Here sensitiveness not merely exists, but can be shown to travel in well-defined lines from the sensitive and outward parts to the receiving and sensitive centre within. There would be no hesitation in saying that a jelly-fish was sensitive, and that in a high degree, but what of its nerves? At the very most its nerves are represented by almost hypothetical tracts, which recent research has with some success endeavoured to detect; but in any case no zoologist could hope to show the existence of the definite nerve elements of higher animals within the soft tissues of the animal. Is not the jelly-fish, therefore, in the same position as the sensitive plant or the Venus' fly-trap? If the non-existence of nerves in plants is to be taken as implying an absence of nerve-power or that the sensations of plants are different from those of animals, in what category shall we class the bell-animalcules, the jelly-fishes, the sensitive zoophytes, the sea-anemones, and a host of other animals, in which either no nerves can be discerned, or in which the march of research has suggested the existence of the bare rudiments of a nervous system and nothing more? The reply to this question is perfectly clear. It may be left for the science of the future to demonstrate the exact nature and seat of the irritability of plants, but there is meanwhile no justification for the belief that plant-irritability is anything less than a form of nervousness, or of the sensibility found in its highest development in animals.

How does the Wordsworthian thought appear in the light of such reflections? is a query which may be asked by way of conclusion to these considerations; and how does the answer to this query affect the larger question of the distinctions between animals and plants? The obvious reply must be that if the "faith" of the poet is not entirely justified, it finds after all a certain measure of definite support. Speculative philosophy may lead to the belief that enjoyment after all is a relative matter, and that the closure of a daisy when the sun's rays no longer descend upon it, is indicative of a certain measure of unconscious delight in influences that

are genial, and of an instinct, equally unconscious of, course, to guard itself from the undesirable and succeeding chill. The closure of a daisy, and the allied instances of sensitiveness to temperature and to other conditions noticed in various flowers, strongly suggest a parallelism between their nervousness and that of lower animals. The sensitive plant, the Venus' fly-trap, and their neighbours, may be said to stand at the head of the plant world, if the place and rank of plants is to be determined by the perfection of their sensations. And although there is unquestionably a large measure of difference between the nervous acts of higher animals and those of plants and lower animals combined, there is to be recognised at the same time a continuous and unbroken sequence whereby the power in virtue of which a sensitive plant droops its leaf, becomes correlated with the mental acts which direct the highest instincts of man and which rule the destinies of nations.

Turning to consider some of the other features in animal and plant existence, with the view of distinguishing between the two worlds of life, we find several very marked and well-defined points for discussion in the community of form and appearance which the animal world presents when compared with the plant world, and *vice versa*. There is no character in ordinary life which we are more disposed to rely upon as a guide to the separation of the plant from the animal than outward appearance. Nor is our faith in this test misapplied, if the objects of our study belong to the higher ranks of either kingdom. But the requirements of the popular system of distinction will not satisfy the truly scientific mind. The object of the investigator is to discover whether there are any absolute distinctions to be drawn between animals and plants. The idea that because we may distinguish an ox from the grass it eats, or a bird from the tree amidst the foliage of which it builds its nest, we can therefore determine the boundaries of the two groups of living beings when considered in all the fulness of their details, is seen to be an idea of abstract nature, and to apply to a limited portion only of the animal and plant worlds. Any definition of an animal or of a plant, to be either satisfactory or useful to the scientific man or to mankind at large, must include all animals and all plants. And we must therefore be prepared to submit our definitions to this latter test as to one of crucial nature.

That the differences between the higher animals and plants are sufficiently pronounced, is an observation which the learning of childhood and the experience of succeeding years amply endorse. Our knowledge of Nature must, however, be measured by larger bounds than those which ordinary observation would set; and when we proceed to compare animal life with plant life, in the lower phases of each kingdom especially, we then witness how confusing is the semblance evolved by our comparison, and how literally impossible is the task of drawing any boundary line whatever between the two worlds of living nature. Example, however, in this, as in very many other matters, is better than precept, and

we may appeal with every confidence to Nature herself to illustrate the difficulties which lie in the way of separating animals from plants.

A handful of chopped hay infused in boiling water, and allowed to cool, forms, as most people are aware, a medium in which myriads of the lowest forms of life will appear, provided the infusion be left freely exposed to the atmosphere. The microscopic examination of a drop of our hay-infusion, after the liquid has exhibited signs of turbidity and commencing decomposition, reveals to us the presence of minute living organisms, amongst which the minute specks known as *Monads* are highly characteristic. Each monad consists of an infinitesimal speck of living matter, within which few or no traces of structures or organs are to be perceived. The microscopic investigation of a monad, in any case, would exhibit no recognisable traces of the organs we are accustomed to see exemplified in higher animals or plants. The length of these microscopic specks is about the $\frac{1}{30000}$ th part of an inch, and in the commoner species the little body is pear-shaped, and bears one or more delicate filaments or *cilia* at the slender extremity. By means of these organs, the monads propel themselves swiftly through the miniature sea in which they live; the spectacle presented to the eye of an observer who regards a drop of the hay-infusion under the microscope, reminding him of nothing so much as the jostling crowds and traffic in the thoroughfares of a great city. Very common and familiar objects of scientific study as are the monads, we are nevertheless placed in the dilemma of being utterly unable to determine in which group of living beings they should be placed. They may be animals it is true, and their active habits would primarily suggest a popular reason for their being included in the zoologist's domain; but, on the other hand, they may with equal scientific propriety be termed plants from sundry peculiarities in their mode of reproduction and development. The more we know about these tantalising organisms, the deeper we appear to plunge into the maze of perplexity which invests their real nature; and the investigation of the entire life-history of several species has left us as ignorant of their exact nature as before. Mere appearance or form in this case literally counts for nothing, and deeper distinctions also fail to determine the nature of these living specks. As will be presently pointed out, the nature of the food on which a living being subsists affords, to a certain extent, a guarantee of its own nature. The power possessed by plants of building up their living tissues from the inorganic or lifeless materials afforded by the soil, and the necessity of living matter—derived from plants or from other animals—as a chief element in the bill of fare of the animal, have rightly enough been regarded as points of value in deciding the nature of living organisms. To offer to a lion, or to a man, carbonic acid, water, ammonia, and mineral matters as food, would be a proceeding partaking of the nature of a physiological insult; whilst a plant, on the contrary, would regard surroundings in which these elements were well distributed, in the light of a veritable land of plenty.

What can be said, however, in the light of these remarks, of the nature of a certain fungus or fungoid growth, found growing in tan-pits and upon putrefying plants, and which the botanist knows under the name of *Ethalium*? This organism, when undergoing development, not only becomes endowed with powers of movement, and thus to begin with violates a well-known distinction between animals and plants, but, in addition, appears to demand for its due nutrition, the substance of animals or of other plants. It thus becomes like an animal in the matter of its feeding. Nor is this all. The food of plants consists, as a little reflection will show, of liquid or gaseous matters alone; the animal possessing a mouth or analogous aperture, and being thereby enabled to receive solid food within its body. But *Ethalium* is known occasionally to feed like an animal on solid nutriment, and along with its neighbours becomes a collective *bête noire* of the biologist in respect of the surprising and puzzling readiness with which it models its life to the plan of the animal on the one hand, or to that of the plant on the other. Hence to the question, "Is *Ethalium* an animal or a plant?" no definite reply can at present be returned; and neither botanist nor zoologist may venture to place this organism on the index *expurgatorius* of their respective sciences until its exact nature has been definitely ascertained.

The contention that animals may invariably be distinguished from plants, and *vice versa*, by their form, is one which a little illustration derived from either kingdom will readily set aside. We have seen that the monads may, as far as form is concerned, be animals, but it may no less strenuously be maintained on this ground that they are plants, since many lower plants closely resemble animalcules in external appearance. A sponge is a familiar example of an animal organism, which presents a very marked resemblance to a plant. Our common fresh-water *Spongilla*, found growing in rivers and canals in the form of a green mass, is as like a plant-organism as can well be imagined. And although, indeed, there are still some naturalists who think the sponges should be relegated to the domain of the botanist, the balance of opinion is decidedly in favour of their animal nature. More plant-like still are the zoophytes with which the oyster-dredger and fisherman are familiar, and which are cast up on sea-shores after storms. Each zoophyte grows as a rooted and fixed organism, and possesses a stem and branches. Before me, as I write, is a beautiful specimen of a *Plumularia*, a comparatively common genus of zoophytes, which raises its stems in clusters from the oyster-shell, to which it is attached, and which, as preserved for the museum, presents the most realistic reproduction of a plant-organism that can well be imagined. Each zoophyte is a literal colony of animals. Its branches, instead of leaves, bear small cells, in each of which a little living animal resides. Nor does the resemblance to a plant cease with this likeness in outward form. The animal buds of the zoophyte are continually falling off like the leaves of the tree, but are as continually being replaced by new organisms which are produced by a veritable process of budding. And as the plant produces its flowers and thereby develops seeds from

which a new generation of plants will spring, so this curious animal tree will develop its reproductive-buds, and from these latter, eggs will be developed; these eggs ultimately reproducing, each by a process of budding, the form of the zoophyte from which they sprang. Crabbe wrote of the zoophytes in a past generation that—

Involved in sea-wrack here you find a race,
Which science, doubting, knows not where to place;
On stone or rock is dropped the embryo seed,
And quickly vegetates a vital breed.

Even if our knowledge of the zoophytes has progressed since the days of the parson-poet, such an advance does not in any degree dispel the wonder with which we regard the animal form growing and existing in the marvellous likeness of the plant. From amongst our pond weeds and from the sea we may obtain the animals collectively named *Polyzoa*, and which, like the zoophytes, present the closest possible resemblance to plants. Nor are these polyzoa organisms of low grade. On the contrary, they are closely related to the oysters and other molluscs; yet, despite their high rank, they exist as veritable plants, and enlarge their colonies by budding after the manner of the zoophytes. It forms, perhaps, one of the best proofs of the success of Nature's mimicry in this respect, that seaside visitors of botanical tastes almost invariably gather the familiar "*Seamats*," or *Flustra*, for seaweeds; these polyzoa—true animals be it remembered—presenting each an exact *facsimile* of a piece of pale-brown seaweed. And in this light are these animals duly preserved in seaweed herbaria as an undetermined species of seaweed, until some better-informed friend disperses "sweetness and light" by a discourse on the animal nature of the supposed seaweeds, and demonstrates by aid of a microscope the countless little cells, in each of which a little living animal was once contained. With the corals growing in the likeness of plants, and other groups of animals possessing plant-like forms at hand, there can be little hesitation in pronouncing that distinction between animals and plants which is founded on form and outward appearance, to be both fallacious and unsound.

That animals move, and plants are rooted, may be true in a general and abstract sense. But should the distinction of motion on the part of the animal, and fixation on that of the plant, be brought forward as a touchstone in enabling us to distinguish between the two groups of living beings, it will be found to share a like fate with the distinction founded on form.

Witness the zoophytes, polyzoa, corals, sea-squirts, and sponges, in proof of the assertion that all animals do not move; and consider the case of the lowest plants or *Algæ*—exemplified by seaweeds and their allies—in support of the counter-assertion that all plants are not rooted and fixed. As you bend over the microscope and scrutinise a portion of the contents of the phial of water you have lately gathered from amongst the recesses of

The green mantle of the standing pool,

you may obtain abundant demonstration of the last-mentioned fact.

There, rolling over and over upon itself, is the living globe known to the naturalist as the *Volvox globator*. Familiar as this organism was to microscopic investigators, it is only within comparatively recent years that it has been duly relegated to the care of the botanist as a true plant. The reasons which formerly influenced naturalists in regarding *Volvox* as an animal, originated chiefly in its entirely free condition. At no period of its life is it fixed, and as it rolls through its native waters, its motor powers are seen to be of the highest order. This little organism exists as a little hollow sphere, around the edge of which numerous little green bodies, each provided with two vibratile "tails," are found. The little filaments or "tails" constitute the locomotive organs of this pseudo-animalcule, which in its manner of reproduction and in its phases of development presents itself as an undoubted plant. The *volvox* is in reality only one of many organisms which have been drafted into the domain of the botanist, after having been located for longer or shorter periods in that of the zoologist. And when we consider that our common seaweeds commence their existence as little actively-swimming specks of living matter—the *spores* of the botanist—we may naturally hesitate before according the possession of locomotive powers with the credit of distinguishing for us between animals and plants.

Not a few of the puzzles of physical science have been solved by the subtle art of the chemist. Is it entirely hopeless to appeal in the present difficulty to chemical science for a touchstone, which shall enable us satisfactorily to say of any given organism, "This is an animal," or "This is a plant?" "Vain are the hopes," it may be said, which the puzzled biologist builds upon the knowledge of his chemical neighbours; for after a recital of the results which have accrued from the analysis of living beings, his dilemma becomes literally "confusion worse confounded." The chemist, to begin with, knows of no single element or substance which is absolutely confined in its distribution to either the animal or plant series. Starches, sugars, and other compounds, long regarded as the property of the plant, are now found within the animal economy either naturally or as the results of abnormal action; whilst certain substances most characteristic of plants, and which might reasonably be regarded as being the exclusive products of plant-life, are known to occur in animals. The *chlorophyll*, or green colouring matter of plants, is one such substance. Wherever a green leaf is found, this substance occurs, and a highly important function it subserves; inasmuch as, through the action of sunlight upon the *chlorophyll*, the deadly carbonic acid gas emitted by animals is split up into its component carbon and oxygen; the former element being retained as an item in the food of the plant, and the latter being returned to the atmosphere to serve its purpose in the breathing of animals. But notwithstanding the intimate relationship of *chlorophyll* to the physiology of plants, it is found to occur in many animals, and, regarding its purpose in the animal economy, we possess as yet no information whatever—unless, indeed, we may suppose that such animals

are thereby enabled to utilise carbonic acid like plants. The Hydra, or common fresh-water polype, and many animalcules, are thus coloured green with chlorophyll, and regarded from a chemical standpoint alone, should therefore be considered to be plants and not animals. The well-known "sea-squirts," or *Ascidians*, found on all our coasts, and which have been credited in certain evolutionary theories with having furnished a far-back ancestor of man himself, are likewise interesting objects to the naturalist, from the fact that the outer wall of their bodies is almost entirely composed of a starchy substance found in plant-tissues at large, and named *cellulose*. It was little to be wondered at that the discovery of this fact was regarded with amazement and incredulity by naturalists, who foresaw the breakdown of the purely chemical distinctions between animals and plants. Judged by the chemist alone, a sea-squirt would be regarded as a plant, since it elaborates a substance otherwise unknown in animal tissues, and, like a dishonest manufacturer, infringes the patent rights of the plant.

The elementary knowledge which shows how plants decompose carbonic acid and purify the atmosphere which has been tainted by the animal, might at first sight be regarded as providing us with a chemical distinction of some weight between the two groups of living things. An organism which was capable of breathing oxygen, might thus be regarded as an animal; whilst the capability of inhaling carbonic acid, might conversely be regarded as a distinctive feature of the plant *régime*. But these distinctions are after all dependent on conditions, which are singularly liable to variation, even in the ordinary life of a plant. That a plant may decompose the carbonic acid gas, two conditions are demanded—sunlight and green colouring matter. Remove either, and the operation on carbonic acid, so characteristic of the plant, becomes converted into that of the animal. A green plant in the dark becomes an animal in its respiration, in that it breathes oxygen and exhales carbonic acid; and so likewise does the plant which has no green colouring matter. A fungus, for example, as far as its breathing is concerned, is practically an animal; since it possesses no chlorophyll, and is therefore, light or no light, compelled to inhale oxygen, and to emit the carbonic acid gas which is seized by its green-coloured neighbours. The difference between ordinary plants and animals in respect of their breathing, as has well been expressed, is one which vanishes with the sunlight; and a distinction of such variable nature cannot therefore be depended upon in the endeavour to separate the one group from the other. Reference has been casually made to the familiar fact that whilst animals can subsist on living matters only, plants as a general rule feed on lifeless materials obtained from the soil. Of old, this feature was made much of, in connection with another opinion, which laid stress on the apparently well-founded notion that animals could subsist on solid food, and that the presence of an internal digestive cavity or stomach adapted to receive such nutriment, was to be regarded as a feature highly characteristic of

the animal world. The march of research has, however, in this respect, as in so many others, shown us that neither the nature of the food, nor the manner of digesting it, can be regarded as an absolute and infallible test of animal or plant nature. Judged by the strict standard of its food, a fungus is as truly an animal in its feeding as in its breathing. It subsists on other plants, on decayed organic or living matter, or on animals. The microscopic fungi which cause skin-diseases in man, the toadstools and fungi which flourish amidst putrefying material, and many lower plants still which exist amongst organic fluids, testify strongly, if in a somewhat unsavoury fashion, to the futility of attempting to draw hard and fast lines of demarcation between animals and plants on the grounds of presumed differences between the food of the two series of organisms. And the distinction drawn from the presumed invariable existence in animals of a stomach-sac, is seen to fare no better when subjected to cross-examination under the light of modern knowledge. In 1828, Cuvier laid great stress on this latter point, but we now know of parasitic worms, of a whole host of low animals, and of other tolerably high animal forms which want a digestive system altogether. The parasite which depends on its host not only for the necessities of life, but for lodgment and protection, becomes an elementary animal in most, if not in all, points of its structure. Living, it may be, in the digestive tract, in the very kitchen, so to speak, of its host, it obtains the ready-made food of the latter, and hence proceeds a waning of its own digestive powers; the digestive organs with which it may have been originally provided becoming rudimentary, and finally disappearing altogether, in accordance with the immutable law of the use and disuse of parts. This much, indeed, we know for certainty, by watching the development of some parasites, which in their young and free state possess a complete digestive system, but which, after attaching themselves to their hosts, lose at once their organs and independence—parasitism, in lower as in higher life, being thus observed to bring its own reward in the shape of wholesale degradation and retrogression. But we may find that some animals which can in no sense be termed parasites may want an alimentary apparatus, and may actually present striking exceptions to the members of their own species and to those of the opposite sex. The female Rotifers, or "wheel-animalcules," possess a complete digestive system and a high organisation in other respects, whilst the males are insignificant creatures, and in the absence of an alimentary canal, must exist by the imbibition of fluid matters. And thus, if the presence of digestive organs is to be taken as an absolute characteristic of the animal, many parasites, the male rotifers, and other forms, must be excluded from the lists of zoologists—an alternative, it need hardly be remarked, which naturalists, for logical and common-sense reasons, would by no means be inclined to adopt.

Neither the art of the chemist nor the acumen of the naturalist has succeeded, as far as we have been able to trace, in discovering any just-

fable grounds for the clear and distinct separation of animals from plants. It may be asked whether microscopic research can include the accomplishment of this latter task in the list of its triumphs, and whether any test of animal or plant nature is discoverable hidden within the minute structure of the bodies of either set of organisms? The plain diversity existing between the structure of the animal and the plant was regarded in the years when the microscope was a mere magnifying glass, as implying a distinction of very definite and deep-seated nature. With the improvement of the microscope the differences between the minute structure of animals and plants gradually diminished. Microscopic research revealed likenesses rather than differences in the composition of living beings; and in the years 1837-38 these ideas of similarity, which had been thus growing upon microscopists, took definite shape in the construction of the well-known "cell-theory." This theory maintained that the elementary tissues of all living beings—animals and plants alike—originated from, and were composed of, the minute elementary bodies known as *cells*. Every tissue subjected to the microscope was found to be capable of being resolved into cells of one kind or another. When a living body grows, it may truly be said to grow through the increase and multiplication of its cells; and these latter bodies present in their own life and growth a condensed epitome of the life of the body at large. Nor is this idea, which regards the living body as essentially an aggregation of cells, to be regarded simply as a speculative thought assisting us in comprehending how the vitality of the bodily parts is carried on. The development of an animal or plant is really the development of many cells out of one primitive cell—the egg, germ, or seed—endowed with powers and possibilities of special kind. And when we study the exact history of the lowest animals and plants, we find that these organisms appear before us as single and simple cells, adapted to live a separate and independent existence. A red snow-plant, dyeing the Arctic landscape with the ruddy hue of itself and its myriads of neighbours; a yeast-plant, capable of producing in certain classes of liquids the complicated action of fermentation; and many lower forms of animal life, are simple and single cells, and nothing more. Thus, by aid of the microscope, we are able to analyse out the structural elements of the animal and the plant, until we find them exhibiting a most confusing identity, both of form and function.

The ideas of 1837-8, however, were destined in their turn to pave the way for a still wider comprehension of the structure of living bodies. Aided by the advance of chemical science, the microscopist was soon forced to ask whether cells might not represent a certain grade of finished and completed work, and whether there might not exist a prior stage in development, in which the unity of the animal and plant was to be more clearly and unmistakably perceived? What preceded the cell, and from what was the cell itself formed? were the queries which the next generation of physiologists set themselves to solve. From unprofitable discussions concerning the part or element of the cell which was to be regarded as the centre of its life and activity, the attention of biolo-

gists was turned to the primitive substance, hitherto greatly overlooked, which formed the basis of the cell. This substance was found to be present in every living cell. In the lowest animals a speck of this matter was found to represent the entire body; and without this substance, it was plain, life itself could not be made manifest. These ideas—the speculations of the last generation—are the facts of the present age, and some such information as these facts contain, is well known to every reader who has, even in a casual manner, investigated the claims of “protoplasm” to be regarded as the universal matter of life, from which the vital forces of nature manipulate, mould, and form monad and man alike. From cells we have gone a step backward, and nearer to the primitive state of animals and plants, with the result of finding that the separation of the two groups of living beings has become a sheer impossibility. Not the art of the chemist, nor the skill of the microscopist, can determine the differences between the little speck of protoplasm which is destined to become the lordly oak, and that which will become the fungus investing its stem. The germ of the monad, and the protoplasmic speck which is destined to develop into the form and semblance of man himself, appear essentially the same to the furthest physical research of our day. The differences which unquestionably do exist between these germs have their seat in the potentialities and possibilities of development which have been impressed upon or are contained within the germ in each case; but these differences are apparent in results and effects only, and leave untouched the grander and mysterious similarity out of which the results arise.

At the close of our brief ramble in search of a philosophic touchstone for the clear distinction of the animal from the plant, we find ourselves called upon to contemplate a phase of nature widely different from the ordinary conceptions of the relationship existing between the two great groups of living nature. Wordsworth's couplet is, after all, much nearer a truthful expression of the case, than the popular idea which extends to the whole of living nature the distinctions that are serviceable for the higher ranks of life alone. That at present we do not know the essential attributes of the animal or the special and unmistakable characteristics of the plant, is a grave truth, painful as the admission may prove to the philosophic mind. And so long as there exist beings which live in a literal “No Man's” territory, which occupy a biological casual-ward, and which defy our every effort to lodge them permanently in either the animal or the plant kingdom, so long will biology present a fit subject for the most earnest attack of the investigator. The entire fabric of living nature is, in truth, a great tree, the branches of which diverge most widely in their highest levels, but which, in its lowest parts, unites and blends all diversities in a common and inseparable unity. The consideration of the absolute unity of life, however, will certainly not lessen the wonder and interest with which we must regard the forces and powers, which, from a common basis and origin, have evolved the varied and complex order of living nature.

Crabbed Age and Youth.

You know my mother now and then argues very notably; always very warmly at least. I happen often to differ from her; and we both think so well of our own arguments, that we very seldom are so happy as to convince one another. A pretty common case, I believe, in all *vehement* debates. She says, I am *too witty*; Angelic, *too pert*; I, that she is *too wise*; that is to say, being likewise put into English, *not so young as she has been*.—Miss Howe to Miss Harlowe, *Clarissa*, vol. ii. Letter xiii.

THERE is a strong feeling in favour of cowardly and prudential proverbs. The sentiments of a man while he is full of ardour and hope are to be received, it is supposed, with some qualification. But when the same person has ignominiously failed and begins to eat up his words, he should be listened to like an oracle. Most of our pocket wisdom is conceived for the use of mediocre people, to discourage them from ambitious attempts, and generally console them in their mediocrity. And since mediocre people constitute the bulk of humanity, this is no doubt very properly so. But it does not follow that the one sort of proposition is any less true than the other, or that Icarus is not to be more praised, and perhaps more envied, than Mr. Samuel Budgett the Successful Merchant. The one is dead to be sure, while the other is still in his counting-house counting out his money; and doubtless this is a consideration. But we have, on the other hand, some bold and magnanimous sayings common to high races and natures, which set forth the advantage of the losing side, and proclaim it better to be a dead lion than a living dog. It is difficult to fancy how the mediocrities reconcile such sayings with their proverbs. According to the latter, every lad who goes to sea is an egregious ass; never to forget your umbrella through a long life would seem a higher and wiser flight of achievement than to go smiling to the stake; and so long as you are a bit of a coward and inflexible in money matters, you fulfil the whole duty of man. It is a still more difficult consideration for our average men, that while all their teachers, from Solomon down to Benjamin Franklin and the infamous Budgett, have inculcated the same ideal of manners, caution, and respectability, those characters in history who have most notoriously flown in the face of such precepts are spoken of in hyperbolical terms of praise, and honoured with public monuments in the streets of our commercial centres. This is very bewildering to the moral sense. You have Joan of Arc, who left a humble but honest and reputable livelihood under the eyes of her parents, to go a-colonelling, in the company of rowdy soldiers,

against the enemies of France; surely a melancholy example for one's daughters! And then you have Columbus, who may have pioneered America, but when all is said, was a most imprudent navigator. His life is not the kind of thing one would like to put into the hands of young people; rather, one would do one's utmost to keep it from their knowledge, as a red flag of adventure and disintegrating influence in life. The time would fail me if I were to recite all the big names in history whose exploits are perfectly irrational and even shocking to the business mind. The incongruity is speaking; and I imagine it must engender among the mediocrities a very peculiar attitude towards the nobler and showier sides of national life. They will read of the Charge of Balaklava in much the same spirit as they assist at a performance of the *Lyons' Mail*. Persons of substance take in the *Times* and sit composedly in pit or boxes according to the degree of their prosperity in business. As for the generals who go galloping up and down among bomb-shells in absurd cocked hats—as for the actors who rattle their faces and demean themselves for hire upon the stage—they must belong, thank God! to a different order of beings, whom we watch as we watch the clouds carcering in the windy, bottomless inane, or read about like characters in ancient and rather fabulous annals. Our offspring would no more think of copying their behaviour, let us hope, than of doffing their clothes and painting themselves blue in consequence of certain admissions in the first chapter of their school history of England.

Discredited as they are in practice, the cowardly proverbs hold their own in theory; and it is another instance of the same spirit, that the opinions of old men about life have been accepted as final. All sorts of allowances are made for the illusions of youth; and none, or almost none, for the disenchantments of age. It is held to be a good taunt, and somehow or other to clinch the question logically, when an old gentleman waggles his head and says: "Ah, so I thought when I was your age." It is not thought an answer at all, if the young man retorts: "My venerable sir, so I shall most probably think when I am yours." And yet the one is as good as the other: pass for pass, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver.

"Opinion in good men," says Milton, "is but knowledge in the making." All opinions, properly so called, are stages on the road to truth. It does not follow that a man will travel any farther; but if he has really considered the world and drawn a conclusion, he has travelled as far. This does not apply to formulæ got by rote, which are stages on the road to nowhere but second childhood and the grave. To have a catchword in your mouth is not the same thing as to hold an opinion; still less is it the same thing as to have made one for yourself. There are too many of these catchwords in the world for people to rap out upon you like an oath and by way of an argument. They have a currency as intellectual counters; and many respectable persons pay their way with nothing else. They seem to stand for vague bodies of theory in the

background. The imputed virtue of folios full of knockdown arguments is supposed to reside in them, just as some of the majesty of the British Empire dwells in the constable's truncheon. They are used in pure superstition, as old clodhoppers spoil Latin by way of an exorcism. And yet they are vastly serviceable for checking unprofitable discussion and stopping the mouths of babes and sucklings. And when a young man comes to a certain stage of intellectual growth, the examination of these counters forms a gymnastic at once amusing and fortifying to the mind.

Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through Newhaven and Dieppe. They were very good places to pass through, and I am none the less at my destination. All my old opinions were only stages on the way to the one I now hold, as itself is only a stage on the way to something else. I am no more abashed at having been a red-hot Socialist with a panacea of my own than at having been a sucking infant. Doubtless the world is quite right in a million ways; but you have to be kicked about a little to convince you of the fact. And in the meanwhile you must do something, be something, believe something. It is not possible to keep the mind in a state of accurate balance and blank; and even if you could do so, instead of coming ultimately to the right conclusion, you would be very apt to remain in a state of balance and blank to perpetuity. Even in quite intermediate stages, a dash of enthusiasm is not a thing to be ashamed of in the retrospect: if St. Paul had not been a very zealous Pharisee, he would have been a colder Christian. For my part, I look back to the time when I was a Socialist with something like regret. I have convinced myself (for the moment) that we had better leave these great changes to what we call great blind forces: their blindness being so much more perspicacious than the little, peering, partial eyesight of men. I seem to see that my own scheme would not answer; and all the other schemes I ever heard propounded would depress some elements of goodness just as much as they encouraged others. Now I know that in thus turning Conservative with years, I am going through the normal cycle of change and travelling in the common orbit of men's opinions. I submit to this, as I would submit to gout or grey hair, as a concomitant of growing age or else of failing animal heat; but I do not acknowledge that it is necessarily a change for the better—I daresay it is deplorably for the worse. I have no choice in the business, and can no more resist this tendency of my mind than I could prevent my body from beginning to totter and decay. If I am spared (as the phrase runs) I shall doubtless outlive some troublesome desires; but I am in no hurry about that; nor, when the time comes, shall I plume myself on the immunity. Just in the same way, I do not greatly pride myself on having outlived my belief in the fairy tales of Socialism. Old people have faults of their own; they tend to become cowardly, niggardly, and suspicious. Whether from the growth of experience or the decline of animal heat, I see that

age leads to these and certain other faults; and it follows, of course, that while in one sense I hope I am journeying towards the truth, in another I am indubitably posting towards these forms and sources of error.

As we go catching and catching at this or that corner of knowledge, now getting a foresight of generous possibilities, now chilled with a glimpse of prudence, we may compare the headlong course of our years to a swift torrent in which a man is carried away; now he is dashed against a boulder, now he grapples for a moment to a trailing spray; at the end, he is hurled out and overwhelmed in a dark and bottomless ocean. We have no more than glimpses and touches; we are torn away from our theories; we are spun round and round and shown this or the other view of life, until only fools or knaves can hold to their opinions. We take a sight at a condition in life, and say we have studied it; our most elaborate view is no more than an impression. If we had breathing space, we should take the occasion to modify and adjust; but at this breakneck hurry, we are no sooner boys than we are adult, no sooner in love than married or jilted, no sooner one age than we begin to be another, and no sooner in the fulness of our manhood than we begin to decline towards the grave. It is in vain to seek for consistency or expect clear and stable views in a medium so perturbed and fleeting. This is no cabinet science, in which things are tested to a scruple; we theorise with a pistol to our head; we are confronted with a new set of conditions on which we have not only to pass a judgment, but to take action, before the hour is at an end. And we cannot even regard ourselves as a constant; in this flux of things, our identity itself seems in a perpetual variation; and not infrequently we find our own disguise the strangest in the masquerade. In the course of time, we grow to love things we hated and hate things we loved. Milton is not so dull as he once was, nor perhaps Ainsworth so amusing. It is decidedly harder to climb trees, and not nearly so hard to sit still. There is no use pretending; even the thrice royal game of hide and seek has somehow lost in zest. All our attributes are modified or changed; and it will be a poor account of us if our views do not modify and change in a proportion. To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty, is to have been stupified for a score of years, and take rank, not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser. It is as if a ship captain should sail to India from the Port of London; and having brought a chart of the Thames on deck at his first setting out, should obstinately use no other for the whole voyage.

And mark you, it would be no less foolish to begin at Gravesend with a chart of the Red Sea. *Si Jeunesse savait, si Vieillesse pouvait*, is a very pretty sentiment, but not necessarily right. In five cases out of ten, it is not so much that the young people do not know, as that they do not choose. There is something irreverent in the speculation, but perhaps the want of power has more to do with the wise resolutions of age than we are always willing to admit! It would be an instructive

experiment to make an old man young again and leave him all his *savoir*. I scarcely think he would put his money in the Savings Bank after all; I doubt if he would be such an admirable son as we are led to expect; and as for his conduct in love, I believe firmly he would out-Herod Herod, and put the whole of his new compeers to the blush. Prudence is a wooden Juggernaut, before whom Benjamin Franklin walks with the portly air of a high priest, and after whom dances many a successful merchant in the character of Atys. But it is not a deity to cultivate in youth. If a man lives to any considerable age, it cannot be denied that he laments his imprudencies, but I notice he often laments his youth a deal more bitterly and with a more genuine intonation. It is customary to say that age should be considered, because it comes last. It seems just as much to the point, that youth comes first. And the scale fairly kicks the beam, if you go on to add that age, in a majority of cases, never comes at all. Disease and accident make short work of even the most prosperous persons; death costs nothing, and the expense of a headstone is an inconsiderable trifle to the happy heir. To be suddenly snuffed out in the middle of ambitious schemes, is tragical enough at best; but when a man has been grudging himself his own life in the meanwhile, and saving up everything for the festival that was never to be, it becomes that hysterically moving sort of tragedy which lies on the confines of farce. The victim is dead—and he has cunningly overreached himself; a combination of calamities none the less absurd for being grim. To husband a favourite claret until the batch turns sour, is not at all an artful stroke of policy; and how much more with a whole cellar—a whole bodily existence! People may lay down their lives with cheerfulness in the sure expectation of a blessed immortality; but that is a different affair from giving up youth with all its admirable pleasures, in the hope of a better quality of gruel in a more than problematical, nay, more than improbable, old age. We should not compliment a hungry man, who should refuse a whole dinner and reserve all his appetite for the dessert, before he knew whether there was to be any dessert or not. If there be such a thing as imprudence in the world, we surely have it here. We sail in leaky bottoms and on great and perilous waters; and to take a cue from the dolorous old naval ballad, we have heard the mermaids singing, and know that we shall never see dry land any more. Old and young, we are all on our last cruise. If there is a fill of tobacco among the crew, for God's sake pass it round, and let us have a pipe before we go!

Indeed, by the report of our elders, this nervous preparation for old age is only trouble thrown away. We fall on guard, and after all it is a friend who comes to meet us. After the sun is down and the west faded, the heavens begin to fill with shining stars. So, as we grow old, a sort of equable jog-trot of feeling is substituted for the violent ups and downs of passion and disgust; the same influence that restrains our hopes, quiets our apprehensions; if the pleasures are less intense, the

troubles are milder and more tolerable; and in a word, this period for which we are asked to hoard up everything as for a time of famine, is, in its own right, the richest, easiest, and happiest of life. Nay, by managing its own work and following its own happy inspiration, youth is doing the best it can to endow the leisure of age. A full, busy youth is your only prelude to a self-contained and independent age; and the muff inevitably develops into the bore. There are not many Doctor Johnsons, to set forth upon their first romantic voyage at sixty-four. If we wish to scale Mont Blanc or visit a thieves' kitchen in the East End, to go down in a diving dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are clogged with prudence and limping with rheumatism, and people begin to ask us: "What does Gravity out of bed?" Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other both in mind and body; to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sunrise in town and country; to be converted at a revival; to circumnavigate the metaphysics, write halting verses, run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theatre to applaud *Hernani*. There is some meaning in the old theory about wild oats; and a man who has not had his greensickness and got done with it for good, is as little to be depended on as an unvaccinated infant. "It is extraordinary," says Lord Beaconsfield, one of the brightest and best preserved of youths up to the date of his last novel, "it is extraordinary how hourly and how violently change the feelings of an inexperienced young man." And this mobility is a special talent entrusted to his care; a sort of indestructible virginity; a magic armour, with which he can pass unhurt through great dangers and come unbedaubed out of the miriest passages. Let him voyage, speculate, see all that he can, do all that he may; his soul has as many lives as a cat; he will live in all weathers, and never be a halfpenny the worse. Those who go to the devil in youth, with anything like a fair chance, were probably little worth saving from the first; they must have been feeble fellows—creatures made of putty and packthread, without steel or fire, anger or true joyfulness, in their composition; we may sympathise with their parents, but there is not much cause to go into mourning for themselves; for to be quite honest, the weak brother is the nastiest of mankind.

When the old man waggles his head and says, "Ah, so I thought when I was your age," he has proved the youth's case. Doubtless, whether from growth of experience or decline of animal heat, he thinks so no longer; but he thought so while he was young; and all men have thought so while they were young, since there was dew in the morning or hawthorn in May; and here is another young man adding his vote to those of previous generations and rivetting another link to the chain of testimony. It is as natural and as right for a young man to be imprudent and exaggerated, to live in swoops and circles, and beat about his cage like any other wild thing newly captured, as it is for old men to turn

grey, or mothers to love their offspring, or heroes to die for something more valuable than their lives. By way of an apologue for the aged, when they feel more than usually tempted to offer their advice, let me recommend the following little tale. A child who had been remarkably fond of toys (and in particular of lead soldiers) found himself growing to the level of acknowledged boyhood without any abatement of this childish taste. He was thirteen; already he had been taunted for dallying overlong about the playbox; he had to blush if he was found among his lead soldiers; the shades of the prison house were closing about him with a vengeance. There is nothing more difficult than to put the thoughts of children into the language of their elders; but this is the effect of his meditations at this juncture: "Plainly," he said, "I must give up my playthings, in the meanwhile, since I am not in a position to secure myself against idle jeers. At the same time, I am sure that playthings are the very pick of life; all people give them up out of the same pusillanimous respect for those who are a little older; and if they do not return to them as soon as they can, it is only because they grow stupid and forget. I shall be wiser; I shall conform for a little to the ways of their foolish world; but so soon as I have made enough money, I shall retire and shut myself up among my playthings until the day I die." Nay, as he was passing in the train along the Estrelles mountains between Cannes and Frejus, he remarked a pretty house in an orange garden at the angle of a bay, and decided that this should be his Happy Valley. *Astrea Redux*; childhood was to come again! The idea has an air of simple nobility to me, not unworthy of *Cincinnatus*. And yet, as the reader has probably anticipated, it is never likely to be carried into effect. There was a worm i' the bud, a fatal error in the premises. Childhood must pass away, and then youth, as surely as age approaches. The true wisdom is to be always seasonable, and to change with a good grace in changing circumstances. To love playthings well as a child, to lead an adventurous and honourable youth, and to settle when the time arrives, into a green and smiling age, is to be a good artist in life and deserve well of yourself and your neighbour.

You need repent none of your youthful vagaries. They may have been over the score on one side, just as those of age are probably over the score on the other. But they had a point; they not only befitted your age and expressed its attitudes and passions, but they had a relation to what was outside of you, and implied criticisms on the existing state of things, which you need not allow to have been undeserved, because you now see that they were partial. All error, not merely verbal, is a strong way of stating that the current truth is incomplete. The follies of youth have a basis in sound reason, just as much as the embarrassing questions put by babes and sucklings. Their most antisocial acts indicate the defects of our society. When the torrent sweeps the man against a boulder, you must expect him to scream, and you need not be surprised if the scream is sometimes a theory. Shelley, clashing at the Church of

England, discovered the cure of all evils in universal atheism. Generous lads irritated at the injustices of society, see nothing for it but the abolishment of everything and Kingdom Come of anarchy. Shelley was a young fool; so are these cocksparrow revolutionaries. But it is better to be a fool than to be dead. It is better to emit a scream in the shape of a theory than to be entirely insensible to the jars and incongruities of life and take everything as it comes in a forlorn stupidity. Some people swallow the universe like a pill; they travel on through the world, like smiling images, pushed from behind. For God's sake, give me the young man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself! As for the others, the irony of facts shall take it out of their hands, and make fools of them in downright earnest, ere the farce be over. There shall be such a mopping and a mowing at the last day, and such blushing and confusion of countenance for all those who have been wise in their own esteem, and have not learnt the rough lessons that youth hands on to age. If we are indeed here to perfect and complete our own natures, and grow larger, stronger, and more sympathetic against some nobler career in the future, we had all best bestir ourselves to the utmost while we have the time. To equip a dull, respectable person with wings would be but to make a parody of an angel.

In short, if youth is not quite right in its opinions, there is a strong probability that age is not much more so. Undying hope is co-ruler of the human bosom with infallible credulity. A man finds he has been wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right. Mankind, after centuries of failure, are still upon the eve of a thoroughly constitutional millennium. Since we have explored the maze so long without result, it follows, for poor human reason, that we cannot have to explore much longer; close by must be the centre, with a champagne luncheon and a piece of ornamental water. How if there were no centre at all, but just one alley after another, and the whole world a labyrinth without end or issue? I overheard the other day a scrap of conversation, which I take the liberty to reproduce. "What I advance is true," said one. "But not the whole truth," answered the other. "Sir," returned the first (and it seemed to me there was a smack of Dr. Johnson in the speech), "Sir, there is no such thing as the whole truth!" Indeed, there is nothing so evident in life as that there are two sides to a question. History is one long illustration. The forces of nature are engaged, day by day, in cudgelling it into our backward intelligences. We never pause for a moment's consideration, but we admit it as an axiom. An enthusiast sways humanity exactly by disregarding this great truth, and dinning it into our ears that this or that question has only one possible solution; and your enthusiast is a fine florid fellow, dominates things for a while and shakes the world out of a doze; but when once he is gone, an army of quiet and uninfluential people set to work to remind us of the other side and demolish the generous imposture. While Calvin is putting

everybody exactly right in his *Institutes* and hot-headed Knox is thundering in the pulpit, Montaigne is already looking at the other side in his library in Perigord, and predicting that they will find as much to quarrel about in the Bible as they had found already in the Church. Age may have one side, but assuredly Youth has the other. There is nothing more certain than that both are right, except perhaps that both are wrong. Let them agree to differ; for who knows but what agreeing to differ may not be a form of agreement rather than a form of difference?

I suppose it is written that any one who sets up for a bit of a philosopher, must contradict himself to his very face. For here have I fairly talked myself into thinking that we have the whole thing before us at last; that there is no answer to the mystery, except that there are as many as you please; that there is no centre to the maze because, like the famous sphere, its centre is everywhere; and that agreeing to differ with every ceremony of politeness, is the only "one undisturbed song of pure concert" to which we are ever likely to lend our musical voices.

R. L. S.

Within the Precincts.

CHAPTER IV.

LADY CAROLINE.



LADY CAROLINE was in the drawing-room at the Deanery alone. Now that her daughter was married this was no unusual circumstance. It was late in the summer evening, after dinner, and she lay on a great square sofa so placed that the view from the large window was dimly visible from it, had she cared for the view. As a matter of fact, at no hour of the twenty-four, however bright or tempting it might be, did Lady Caroline care much for the view; but still, when a

room is artistically arranged, such a possibility cannot be altogether kept out of consideration. This evening, however, there was no light to see anything by. The room was dark, nothing distinctly visible in it but the great broad Elizabethan window which filled one end. The upper part of this window was filled with old painted glass in silvery tinted quarries, soft greys and yellows, surrounding the golden and ruby glories of several blazons of arms, and drawing the eye irresistibly with the delight of radiant colour; underneath opened the great plain all dim and wide, a suggestion of boundless air and distance rather than a landscape, while in the room itself nothing was distinct but here and there a glimmer of reflection from a mirror breaking the long line of the walls. Nor was its only occupant very distinguishable as she reclined upon her sofa in absolute stillness and tranquillity. The lace on her head and about her throat



SHE LOOKED, TREMBLING, FOR LADY CAROLINE.

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showed faintly white in the corner, that was all. Perhaps if the mind could have been seen as well as the body, Lady Caroline's individual-soul, such as it was, would have told for little more amid the still life around : a something vaguely different from the chairs and softly cushioned sofas, a little more than one of the dim mirrors, a little less than a picture, was this human creature to whom all the rest belonged. She had lived irreproachably on the earth for a number of years (though not for nearly so many years as the great part of her furniture), and fulfilled all her functions very much as they did, honestly holding together, affording a temporary place of repose occasionally, convenient for household meals, and ordinary domestic necessities. Perhaps now and then Lady Caroline conferred something of the same kind of solace and support which is given to the weary by a nice warm soft easy-chair, comfortably cushioned and covered ; but that was about the highest use of which she was capable. She was waiting now quite tranquilly till it pleased the servants to bring her lights. They were in no hurry, and she was in no hurry. She never did anything, so that it was immaterial whether her room was lighted early or late, and on the whole she liked this dim interval between the active daylight, when people were always in motion, and the lamps, which suggested work, or a book, or something of the sort. Lady Caroline, though she had not very much mind, had a conscience, and knew that it was not quite right for a responsible creature to be without employment ; therefore she made certain efforts to fulfil the object of her existence by keeping a serious volume on the table beside her, and putting in a few stitches now and then in a piece of wool-work. But at this hour there was no possibility for the most anxious conscience to speak, and Lady Caroline's was not anxious, only correct, not troubling itself with any burden beyond what was necessary. It may be supposed, perhaps, that she was sad, passing this twilight quite alone, so soon after the marriage and departure of her only daughter ; but this would have been a mistake, for Lady Caroline was not sad. Of course she missed Augusta. There was no one now to wake her up when she dozed, as now and then happened, in a warm afternoon after luncheon ; and, as a matter of fact, one or two visitors had actually been ushered into the drawing-room while her head was drooping upon her right shoulder, and her cap a little awry. But at this tranquil hour in the dark, when nobody expected anything of her, neither without nor within—neither conscience, nor the Dean, nor society—it cannot be said that any distressful recollection of Augusta mingled with her thoughts. Nor, indeed, had she any thoughts to mingle it with, which was perhaps the reason. She was very comfortable in the corner of her sofa, with nothing to disturb her. Had Jarvis her maid been at hand to tell her what was going on in the precincts, or any bit of gossip that might have floated upward from the town, it would probably have added a little more flavour to her content ; but even that flavour was not necessary to her, and she was quite happy as she was.

Some one came into the room as she lay in this pleasant quiet. She thought it was Jeremie coming to light the candles, and said nothing; but it was not so dignified a person as Mr. Jeremie, the Dean's butler, who was generally taken for one of the Canons by visitors unacquainted with the place. This was indeed a shirt-front as dazzling as Jeremie's which came into the soft gloom, but the owner of it was younger and taller, with a lighter step and less solemn demeanour. He gave a glance round the room to see if anyone was visible, then advanced steadily with the ease of an *habitué* among the sofas and tables. "Are you here, Aunt Caroline?" he said. "Oh, you are there! Shall I ring for lights? it must be dull sitting all by yourself in the dark."

"If you please, my dear," said Lady Caroline, who, having no will of her own to speak of, never set it in opposition to anybody else's; answering a question as she did thus promptly, there was no occasion at the same time to answer a mere remark.

"I am afraid you are moping," he said, "missing Augusta. To be sure, it does make a great difference in the house."

"No, my dear," said Lady Caroline, "I can't say I was thinking of Augusta. She is quite happy, you know."

"I hope so," he said, laughing. "If they are not happy now, when should they be happy? the honeymoon scarcely over, and all sorts of delights before them."

"Yes; that is just what I was going to say," said Lady Caroline; "so why should I mope?"

"Why, indeed?" He took his aunt's soft hand into his, and caressed it. Rollo was fond of his aunt, strange though it may appear. She had never scolded him, though this was the favourite exercise of all the rest of his family. When he came home in disgrace she had always received him just the same as if he had come in triumph. Whoever might find fault with him for wasting his talents, or disappointing the hopes of his friends, his Aunt Caroline had never done so. He could not help laughing a little as he spoke, but he caressed her soft white hand as he did so, compunctious, to make amends to her for the ridicule. Lady Caroline, it need not be said, attached no idea of ridicule to his laugh. "But I have come to tell you," said Rollo, "that I have been out again walking up and down the Dean's Walk, as I did the night of the wedding, and I have not been able to hear a note of your singer—the girl with the wonderful voice."

"Did I say there was a girl with a wonderful voice, my dear? I forget."

"Not you, but Augusta; don't you remember, Aunt Caroline, a girl in the Cloisters, in—in the Lodges, a Miss—I don't remember the name. Lottie something, Augusta called her."

"Ah! Augusta was too ready to make friends. It is Miss Despard, I suppose."

"Well; might we not have Miss Despard here some evening? If

her voice is as fine as Augusta said, it might be the making of me, Aunt Caroline. An English *prima donna* would make all our fortunes. And unless I hear her, it is not possible, is it, I appeal to your candour, that I can judge?"

"But, my dear!" "But" was a word which scarcely existed in Lady Caroline's vocabulary. It meant an objection, and she rarely objected to anything. Still there was a limit to which instinct and experience alike bound her. She was not unkind by nature, but rather the reverse, and if there was anything that approached a passion—nay, not a passion, an emotion—in her nature, it was for the poor. She who was little moved by any relationship, even the closest, almost loved the poor, and would take trouble for them, petting them when they were sick, and pleased to hear of all their affairs when they were well—conscience and inclination supplementing each other in this point. But the poor, the real "poor," they who are so kind as to be destitute now and then, with nothing to eat and all their clothes at the pawnbroker's, and their existence dependent upon the clergyman's nod, or the visit of the district lady—these were very different from the Chevaliers in their Lodges. There even Lady Caroline drew the line. She did what was suggested to her in a great many cases, but here she felt that she could make a stand when necessity required. Not the people in the Lodges! the shabby genteel people who thought they had claims to be treated as ladies and gentlemen, as if they were in society. The very mildest, the very gentlest must pause somewhere, and this is where Lady Caroline made her stand. "My dear," she said, something like a flush coming to her sallow cheek, for Jeremie by this time had brought the lamps and lighted the candles and made her visible; "I have never visited the people in the Lodges. I have always made a stand there. There was one of them appointed through my brother Courtland, you know—your papa, my dear—but when Beatrice asked me to notice them I was obliged to decline. I really could not do it. I hope I never shrink from doing my duty to the poor; but these sort of people—you must really excuse me, Rollo; I could not, I do not think I could do it."

Mr. Ridsdale had never seen anything so near excitement in his aunt's manner before. She spoke with little movements of her hands and of her head, and a pink flush was on her usually colourless face. The sight of this little flutter and commotion which he had caused amused the young man. Jeremie was still moving noiselessly about, letting down a loop of curtain, kindling a distant corner into visibility by lighting one of the groups of candles upon the wall. The room was still very dim, just made visible, not much more, and Jeremie's noiseless presence did not check the expression of Lady Caroline's sentiments. She made her little explanation with a fervour such as, we have said, her nephew had never before seen in her. He was greatly astonished, but he was also, it must be allowed, somewhat disposed to laugh.

"You must pardon me," he said, "for suggesting anything you don't like, Aunt Caroline. But did not Augusta have Miss Despard here?"

"Oh, yes—with the rest of her people who sang. Augusta was always having her singing people—who were not in our set at all."

"I suppose that is all over now," said Rollo in a tone of regret.

"Oh, not quite over. Mrs. Long brought some of them the other day. She thought it would amuse me. But it never amused me much," said Lady Caroline. "Augusta was pleased, and that was all. I don't want them, Rollo; they disturb me. They require to have tea made for them, and compliments. I am not so very fond of music, you are aware."

"I know; not fond enough to give up anything for it; but confess it is often a resource after dinner, when the people are dull?"

"The people are always just the same, Rollo. If they have a good dinner, that is all I have to do with them. They ought to amuse themselves."

"Yes, yes," he resumed, laughing. "I know you are never dull, Aunt Caroline. Your thoughts flow always in the same gentle current. You are never excited, and you are never bored."

A gentle smile came over Lady Caroline's face; no one understood her so well. She was astonished that so many people found fault with Rollo. He was, she thought, her favourite nephew, if it was right to have a favourite. "It is no credit to me," she said. "I was always brought up in that way. But girls do not have such a good training now."

"No, indeed—the very reverse, I think—they are either in a whirl of amusement or else they are bored. But, Aunt Caroline, people in general are not like you. And for us who have not had the advantage of your education, it is often very dull, especially after dinner. Now you are going to have a gathering to-morrow. Don't you think it would be a good thing to have a little music in the evening, and ask Miss Despard to come and sing? That is not like taking any notice of the Chevaliers, poor old fellows! Have her to amuse the people, just as you might have Punch and Judy, you know, or some of the sleight-of-hand men?"

"I should never think of having either the one or the other, Rollo."

"But a great many people do. It was quite the right thing for a time. Come, Aunt Caroline! My uncle is often bored to death with these duty dinners. He will bless you if you have a little music afterwards and set him free."

"Do you really think so? I can't understand why you should all talk of being bored. I am never bored," said Lady Caroline.

"That is your superiority," said the courtier. "But we poor wretches often are. And I really must hear this voice. You would not like to stand in the way of my interests now when I seem really about to have a chance?"

"It is a very curious thing to me," said Lady Caroline, stimulated by so much argument to deliver herself of an original remark, "that such

a clever young man as you are, Rollo, should require to connect yourself with singers and theatres. Such a thing was never heard of in my time."

"That is just it," he said, putting on a mournful look. "If I had not been a clever young man, things would have gone a great deal better with me. There was nothing of that foolish description I am sure, Aunt Caroline, in your time."

"No," she said; then added, almost peevishly, "I do not know how to communicate with the girl, Rollo. She is so out of society."

"But only on the other side of the way," he said. "Come, write her a note, and I will take it myself, if Jeremie or Joseph are too grand to go."

"Must I write her a note? I never in my life sent a note to the Lodges," said Lady Caroline, looking at her hands as if the performance would soil them. Then she added, with a look of relief, "I very often see her when I am out for my drive. You can tell the coachman to stop if he sees her, and I will tell her to come—that will be much the better way."

"But if she should be engaged?"

Lady Caroline gave him a very faint smile of amiable scorn and superior knowledge. "You forget these people are not in society," she said.

To make head against this sublime of contempt was more than Rollo could do. Lady Caroline vanquished him as she had vanquished many people in her day, by that invincible might of simple dulness against which nothing can stand.

Mr. Rollo Ridsdale was one of the many very clever young men in society who are always on the eve of every kind of fame and fortune, but never manage to cross the border between hope and reality. He had been quite sure of success in a great many different ways: at the university, where he was certain of a first class, but only managed to "scrape through" the ordeal of honours in the lowest room;—in diplomacy, where he was expected to rise to the highest rank, but spoiled all his chances by a whisper of a state secret, of no importance to anybody, when only an unpaid attaché;—in the House of Commons, where he broke down in his maiden speech, after costing what his family described as a "fortune" to secure his election;—and finally, in commerce, where his honourable name was just secured from the éclat of a disgraceful bankruptcy by the sacrifice of a second "fortune" on the part of the family. It is but fair to add, however, that Rollo had nothing to do with the disgracefulness of the commercial downfall in which he was all but involved. And here he was at eight-and-twenty once more afloat, as the fashionable jackal and assistant of an enterprising *impresario*, indefatigable in his pursuit of the prima donna of the future, and talking of nothing but operas. This was why he had made that moonlight promenade under Lottie Despard's windows on the evening of his cousin's wedding-day. He did not know her, but Lottie knew him as the popu-

lace know all, even the most insignificant, members of the reigning family. Lady Caroline's nephew, Augusta's cousin, was of much more importance to the community than any of the community had been to him up to this moment, though the thoughts which passed through Lottie's mind, as, with extreme surprise, she recognised him gazing up at her window, suggested a very different hypothesis. What could Lottie imagine, as, with the most bewildering astonishment, she identified Mr. Ridsdale, but that he had seen her as she had seen him, and that it was admiration at least, if not a more definite sentiment, which brought him to wander in front of the window, as poor young Purcell did, whose delusion she regarded without either surprise or compassion? Rollo Ridsdale was a very different person; and Lottie had been too much bewildered by his appearance to found any theory upon it, except the vaguest natural thrill of flattered pleasure and wonder. Was it possible?—When a young man comes and stares at a lady's window, going and returning, waiting apparently for a glimpse of her—what is anyone to suppose?—There is but one natural and ordinary explanation of such an attitude and proceeding. And if Lottie's fancy jumped at this idea, how could she help it? It gave her a little shock of pleasure and exhilaration in her depressed state. Why should she have been exhilarated? It is difficult to say. She did not know anything of Mr. Ridsdale—whether his admiration was worth having or the reverse. But he was Lady Caroline's nephew, who had always been inaccessible to Lottie; he was Augusta's cousin, who had neglected her. And, if it really could be possible that, notwithstanding this, he had conceived a romantic passion for Lottie, what could be more consolatory to the girl who had felt herself humiliated by the indifference and contempt with which these ladies had treated her? The idea brought the light back to her eyes, and her natural gay courage revived again. She would make reprisals, she would "be even with them," and pay them back in their coin; and where is the girl or boy to whom reprisals are not sweet?

This, however, is a digression from Lady Caroline, who went to her tranquil couch that night with a heavier heart than she had known for years. It was a revolution which had occurred in her life. During Augusta's reign she had been passively resistant always, protesting under her breath against the invasion of the singing people of all kinds into her sacred and exclusive world. She had supported it with heroic calm, entrenching herself behind the ladies who were really in society, and whom she could receive without derogation; but to Lottie and the other people who were outside of her world she had never shown any civility, as she was glad to think, on surveying the situation that night. She had not brought it on herself. She had never shown them any civility. A salutation with her eyelids, a cup of tea from her table, the privilege of breathing the same air with her—this had been all she had ever done for her daughter's *protégées*, and hitherto nobody, she was obliged to allow, had presumed upon it. But *that* Miss Despard was

not like the timid and respectful singing ladies from the town. She was a bold young woman, who thought herself as good as anyone, and looked as if she ought to be talked to, and taken notice of, as much as anyone. And it was not possible to get rid of her as the ladies in the town could be got rid of. Lady Caroline could not go out of her own door, could not go to church, without meeting Miss Despard, and feeling, what she called within herself, 'the broad stare' of that dangerous girl. And now was it possible, was it conceivable, that she was herself to take the initiative and re-invite Miss Despard? Not for years, if indeed ever in her life, had Lady Caroline gone to bed with such a weight on her mind. She sighed as she lay down on that bed of down—nay, not of down, which is old-fashioned and not very wholesome either, now-a-days, people say—but on her mattress of delicately arranged springs, which moved with every movement. She sighed as she lay down upon it, and the springs swayed under her; and she sighed again in the morning as she woke, and all that had happened came back into her mind. Poor dear Rollo! She did not like to cross him, or to go against him, since he had made so great an object of it. Oh! that Augusta had but held her peace, and had not inflamed his mind about this girl's voice! After all, her voice was nothing wonderful; it was just a soprano, as most girls' voices were; and that she, Lady Caroline, should be compelled to exert herself—compelled to go against her principles, to come into personal contact with a person of a different class! She who had always been careful to keep herself aloof!—It was very hard upon Lady Caroline. She sighed at breakfast so that the Dean took notice of it.

"Is there anything the matter?" he said. "Rollo, do you know what is the matter? This is the third time I have heard your aunt sigh."

"I am sure she does not look as if anything was the matter," said Rollo, with that filial flattery which women like, at Lady Caroline's age.

She gave him a faint little smile, but shook her head and sighed again.

"Bless my soul!" said the Dean, "I must look in upon Enderby, and tell him to come and see you."

"Oh, there is nothing the matter with me," Lady Caroline said; but she had no objection to see Enderby, who was the doctor and always very kind. It even pleased her to think of confiding her troubles to him, for indeed she had the humbling consciousness upon her mind that she had never been a very interesting patient. She had never had anything but headaches and mere external ills to tell him about. She had never till now been able to reveal to him even a headache which had been caused by trouble of mind. Lady Caroline, though she was dull, had a faint wish to be interesting as well as other people, and it would be a relief to pour out this trouble to his sympathising ear. The ladies of the town did not love—any more than Lady Caroline did, and the other ladies in the cloisters—those nondescripts, neither one thing nor another, neither people to visit, nor people to be altogether ignored, who lived in

the Chevaliers' Lodges—and she knew that she was sure of sympathy from the doctor, whose wife at least must have suffered from them too.

The idea of meeting Lottie when she went out was a very happy one, Lady Caroline thought. She could not but feel that necessity was producing invention within her. Perhaps she might not meet Lottie, perhaps Lottie might be frightened and would decline to come. She drove out that afternoon with a little excitement, full of hope, if she felt also the palpitation of a little fear. These emotions made quite a pleasant and unusual stir in the dull fluid that filled her veins. She was half disturbed and half pleased when she found that Rollo proposed going with her, a very unusual compliment from a young man. He said it was because he had hurt his foot and could not walk. "Dear me!" Lady Caroline said, "I will send Jarvis to see if it is a sprain." "Oh no, it is not a sprain," he said; "a little rest is all it requires." "You will find carriage exercise very nice," Lady Caroline said; "a perfect rest—and much more amusement than walking, which tires one out directly." And thus they set out perfectly pleased with each other. But the coachman had got his instructions carefully from Rollo's own lips, and there was now no possibility of escape for the poor lady, over whom Rollo himself had mounted guard. They had not gone above a few yards from the Deanery door, when the carriage suddenly drew up with a jar, to the side of the high terrace pavement which lay in front of the Lodges. Rollo, who was on the alert, looked eagerly out, and saw a light erect figure, full of energy and life, coming up in the plainest of morning frocks, one of those simple toilettes which fashion has lately approved. She looked perfectly fresh, and like the summer morning, as she came along, with a little basket in her hand; and suddenly it burst upon Rollo, as Lottie raised her eyes with a glance of astonished interest in them, wondering why it was that Lady Caroline's carriage should stop there, that this unknown girl was extremely handsome—a thing for which the young man had not been prepared. "Is this Miss Despard? but she will be gone unless you send to her. Shall I go and call her to you?" he said.

"Oh, she will come when she sees I want her," said Lady Caroline. But the only answer he made was to jump up and let himself out of the carriage before Joseph could get off from the box. He went up to Lottie with his hat in his hand, very much surprised in his turn by the vivid blush which covered her cheeks at sight of him. He was flattered, and he was surprised; was it a mere trick of unformed manners, the *gaucherie* of a girl who had never been in society, and did not know how to behave herself? or was it that she saw something unusually fascinating in himself, Rollo? To see so handsome a girl blush at his approach was a tribute to his attractions, which Rollo was not the man to be indifferent to. He almost forgot the business side of the transaction, and his hunt after a prima donna, in the pleasure of such an encounter. Could she have seen him somewhere before and been "struck" with him? Rollo wondered. It was an agreeable beginning. He went up to her with his

hat in his hand as if she had been a princess. "I beg your pardon," he said, "my aunt, Lady Caroline Huntington, has sent me to beg that you would let her speak to you for a moment." Lottie looked at him bewildered, with eyes that could scarcely meet his. She could hardly make out what he said in the sudden confusion and excitement of meeting thus face to face the man whom she had seen under her window. What was it? Lady Caroline asking to speak with her, awaiting her there, in her carriage, in the sight of all St. Michael's! Lottie stood still for a moment, and gazed at this strange sight, unable to move or speak for wonder. What could Lady Caroline have to say? She could not be going, on the spot, out of that beautiful chariot with its prancing horses, to plead her nephew's suit with the girl who knew nothing of him except his lover-like watch under her window. Lottie could not trust herself to make him any reply—or rather she said idiotically, "Oh, thank you," and turned half reluctant, confused, and anxious, to obey the call. She went to the carriage door, and stood without a word, with her eyes full of wonder, to hear what the great lady had to say.

But it was not much at any time that Lady Caroline had to say. She greeted Lottie with the usual little movement of her eyelids. "How do you do, Miss Despard?" she said. "I wanted to ask if you would come to the Deanery, this evening, for a little music?" There was no excitement in that calmest of voices. Lottie felt so much ashamed of her wonderful vague absurd anticipations, that she blushed more hotly than ever.

"At half-past nine," said Lady Caroline.

"You have not presented me to Miss Despard, Aunt Caroline—so I have no right to say anything; but if I had any right to speak, I should say I hope—I hope—that Miss Despard is not engaged, and that she will come."

How earnest his voice was! and what a strange beginning of acquaintance! Lottie felt half disposed to laugh, and half to cry, and could not lift her eyes in her confusion to this man who—was it possible?—was in love with her, yet whom she did not know.

"Oh, I am not engaged—I—shall be very happy." What else could she say? She stood still, quite unaware what she was doing, and heard him thank her with enthusiasm, while Lady Caroline sat quite passive. And then the splendid vision rolled away, and Lottie stood alone wondering like a creature in a dream, on the margin of the way.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE DEANERY.

LOTTIE stood as if in a dream, hearing the ringing of the horses' hoofs, the roll of the carriage, and nothing more; all the sounds in the world seemed to be summed up in these. She could scarcely tell what had happened to her. A great honour had happened to her, such as might

have impressed the imagination of anyone in that little world of St. Michael's, but not so great a thing as she thought. Lady Caroline had asked her to tea. It was something, it was much; it was what Lady Caroline had never done to anyone in the Lodges before. Even Mrs. Seymour, whose husband was really *one of the Seymours*, people said, and whom Lady Courtland had begged Lady Caroline to be kind to, had not been so honoured. But for all that, it was not what Lottie thought. She stood there with her heart beating, feeling as if she had just fallen from the clouds, in a maze of bewildered excitement, scarcely able to realise what had befallen her—and yet that which had befallen her was not what she thought. Most things that happen to us are infinitely better in thought and in hope than they are in reality; but this was doubly, trebly the case with poor Lottie, who found the cause of this new happiness of hers in a delusion, a mistake, most innocently, most unwittingly occasioned. It was not a thing that anybody had intended. Rollo Ridsdale had meant no harm when he strolled along the Dean's Walk in the evening on two separate nights, looking up at Lottie's window and hoping to hear her sing that he might tell his partner of a new voice to be had for the asking. And neither had Lottie meant any harm; it was not vanity, it was the most natural conclusion from what she saw with her own eyes. How could she doubt it? He must have seen her when she was not aware of it, and fallen in love with her, as people say, at first sight! a romantic compliment that always goes to a girl's heart. There was no other interpretation to be put upon the fact of his lingering about looking up at her window. She had said to herself it was nonsense; but how could it be nonsense? What other explanation could anyone give of such a proceeding? And now he had managed to make Lady Caroline, she who was the queen of the place and unapproachable, take his cause in hand. For what other possible reason could Lady Caroline, who never noticed anyone out of her own sphere, have paid this special and public compliment to Lottie, and invited her to Paradise, as it were—to tea—not afternoon tea, which means little, but *in the evening*? But here Lottie's fancies became so bewildering that she could not follow herself in her thoughts; much less would it be possible for us to follow her. For, if Lady Caroline had thus interfered on her nephew's behalf, securing for him a personal introduction and an opportunity of making her acquaintance, what could this mean but that Lady Caroline was on his side and meant to help him and approved of his sentiments? This thought was too wonderful to be entertained seriously; it only glanced across the surface of Lottie's mind, making her laugh within herself with a bewildered sense that there was something absurd in it. Lady Caroline stoop from her high estate to lift her, Lottie, to a place upon that dazzling eminence! The girl felt as if she had been spun round and round like a teetotum, though it was an undignified comparison. She did not know where she might find herself when, dizzy and tottering, she should come to herself. All this time Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, at her window, where she

always sat surveying everything that went on, had been knocking an impatient summons with her knuckles on the pane; and this it was at last which brought Lottie to herself. She obeyed it with some reluctance, yet at the same time she was glad to sit down somewhere till the giddiness should go off and the hurry of her thoughts subside. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy met her with a countenance full of interest and eagerness; a new incident was everything to her. She was as eager as if it was of vital importance to know every word that Lady Caroline said.

"Then what was she saying to ye, me dear?" cried the old lady, from whom excitement almost took away the breath.

"She did not say anything," said Lottie, relieving her feelings by a little laugh. "She never does say anything; she asked me to tea."

"And you call that nothing, ye thankless creature! It's spoilt ye are, Lottie, me darling, and I always said that was what would come of it. She asked you to tea? sure it'll be afternoon tea for one of the practisings, like it was in Miss Augusta's day?"

"No! I am to go in after dinner. It is not the first time, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy; Augusta has often asked me. What else did I get my white frock for?—for there are no parties here to go to. She used to say: 'Come in, and bring your music.' It is not me they want, it is my voice," said Lottie, assuming a superiority of wisdom which she did not possess.

"All in good time, me dear," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. "And did my Lady Caroline bid you to bring your music, too? The daughter is one thing, and the mother is clean another. I hope you've got your frock in order, me darlin'; clean and nice and like a lady? You should send it to Mrs. Jones to iron it out; she's the plague of my life, but she's a beautiful clear starcher—that I will say for her; and if you want a ribbon or so, me jewel, or anything I have that ye may take a fancy to—There's my brooch with O'Shaughnessy's miniature, sure ne'er a one of them would find out who it was. You might say it was your grandpapa, me honey, in his red coat, with his medals; and fine he'd look on your white frock——"

"Thank you!" said Lottie in alarm; "but I never wear anything, you know, except poor mamma's little pearl locket."

"Sure I know," said the old woman, with a laugh; "a body can't wear what they haven't got! But you needn't turn up your little nose at my big brooch, for when it was made it was the height of the fashion, and now everything that's old is the height of the fashion. And so me Lady Caroline, that's too grand to say 'Good morning to ye, ma'am,' or 'Good evening to ye,' after ye've been her neighbour for a dozen years, stops her grand carriage to bid this bit of a girl to tea, and Miss Lottie takes it as cool as snowballs, if ye please. Well, well, honey! I don't envy ye, not I; but you're born to luck as sure as the rest of us are born to trouble, and that all the Abbey can see."

"I born to luck! I don't think there is much sign of it," said Lottie, though with a tumultuous leap of the heart which contradicted

the words. "And what is there, I should like to know, that all the Abbey can see?"

"If you think I'm going to tell you the nonsense that is flying about, and put fancies in your little head!" said the old Irishwoman, "go your ways, and see that your frock's in order; and I'll run in and see you dressed, me pet, and I'll bring the brooch and the box with me best ribbons; maybe at the last you'll change your mind."

Lottie went home with her head in the clouds; was she indeed "born to luck?" Was she going to be transplanted at once without the tedious probation which even in poetry, even in story-books, the good heroine has generally to go through, into that heaven of wealth and rank and luxurious surroundings which she felt to be her proper sphere? It was not that Lottie cared for luxury in its vulgarer forms; she liked what was beautiful and stately—the large noble rooms, the dignified aspect which life bore when unconnected with those small schemes and strugglings in which her existence was spent; but above all she liked, it must be allowed, to be uppermost, to feel herself on the highest round of the ladder—and hated and resisted with all her soul the idea of being inferior to anybody. This was the thing above all others which Lottie could not bear. She had been brought up with the idea that she belonged by right of nature to the upper classes, a caste entirely removed by immutable decree of Providence from shopkeepers and persons engaged in trade, and to whom it was comparatively immaterial whether they were poor or rich, nothing being able to alter the birthright which united them with all that was high and separated them from all that was low. But this right had not been acknowledged at St. Michael's. She and her family had been mixed up in the crowd along with the O'Shaughnessys, and the Dalrymples, and all sorts of common people; and nobody, not even the O'Shaughnessys, had been impressed by the long descent of the Despard family and its unblemished gentility. Something else then evidently was requisite to raise her to her proper place, to the sphere to which she belonged. Lottie would not have minded poverty, or difficulty, or hard work, had she been secure of her "position;" but that was just the thing of which in present circumstances she was least secure. It was for this reason that Lady Caroline's notice was sweet to her—for this that she had been so deeply disappointed when no sign of amity was accorded to her on the wedding-day. And this was why her heart leapt with such bewildering hope and excitement at the new event in her career. She did not know Mr. Ridsdale; perhaps his admiration or even his love were little worth having; and nothing but what are called interested motives could have possibly moved Lottie to the thrill of pleasure with which she contemplated his supposed attachment. A girl whose head is turned by the mere idea of a lover who can elevate her above her neighbours, without any possibility of love on her part to excuse the bedazzlement, is not a very fine or noble image; yet Lottie's head was turned, not vulgarly, not meanly, but with an intoxication that was full of poetry and

all that is most ethereal in romance. A tender, exquisite gratitude to the man who thus seemed to have chosen her, without any virtue of hers, filled her heart; and to the great lady who, though so lofty, and usually cold as marble to the claims of those beneath her, could thus forget her pride for Lottie. This feeling of gratitude softened all the other emotions in her mind. She was ready to be wooed, but then the very manner of the first step in this process, the lingering outside her window, which was a sign of the tenderest, most delicate, and reverential love-making (but she did not think it so in the case of poor young Purcell), showed what a respectful, ethereal, poetical wooing it would be. Thus Lottie's whole being was full of the most tremulous, delicious happiness, all made up of hope and anticipation, and grateful admiration of the fine generous sentiments of her supposed lover, even while it was founded, as you may say, on self-interest and ambition, and sentiments which were not generous at all.

And with what a flutter at her heart she put out her white muslin frock, which (not having any confidence in Mrs. Jones) she ironed herself most carefully and skilfully, with such interest in keeping it fresh as no Mrs. Jones in the world could have. For girls who have no ornaments to speak of, how kind summer is, providing roses, which are always the most suitable of decorations! One knot of them in her hair and one at her breast—what could Lottie want more? Certainly not the big brooch with Major O'Shaughnessy in his red coat, which her old friend was so anxious to pin the roses with. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy thought it would be "such a finish," and prove satisfactorily that it was not poverty but fancy that made Lottie decorate herself with fresh flowers instead of the fine artificial wreath with a nice long trail down the back, which was what the old lady herself would have preferred. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, however, was mollified by the girl's acceptance of the Indian shawl which she brought to wrap her in. "And you might just carry it into the room with you, me dear, as if ye thought ye might feel chilly," said the old lady, "for it's a beauty, and I should like me Lady Caroline to see it. I doubt if she's got one like it. Good-night and a pleasant evening to ye, me honey," she cried, as, under charge of Law, and with her dress carefully folded up, Lottie with her beating heart went across the broad gravel of the Dean's Walk to the Deanery door. It was a lovely summer night, not dark at all, and the Signor was practising in the Abbey, and the music rolling forth in harmonious thunders rose now more now less distinct as the strain grew softer or louder. A great many people were strolling about, loitering, when Lottie came out, skimming over the road in her little white shoes, with the roses in her hair. All the rest of her modest splendours were hidden by the shawl, but these could not be hidden. The people about all turned their heads to look at her. She was going to the Deanery. It was the same in St. Michael's as visiting the Queen.

The Dean's dinner-party had been of a slightly heavy description. There were several of the great people from the neighbourhood,

county people whom it was necessary to ask periodically. It was so distinctly made a condition, at the beginning of this story, that we were not to be expected to describe the doings on Olympus, nor give the reader an insight into the behaviour of the gods and goddesses, that we feel ourselves happily free from any necessity of entering into the solemn grandeur of the dinner. It was like other dinners in that region above all the clouds. The ladies were fair and the gentlemen wise, and they talked about other ladies and gentlemen not always perhaps equally wise or fair. Mr. Rollo Ridsdale was the greatest addition to the party. He knew all the very last gossip of the clubs. He knew what Lord Sarum said to Knowsley, upbraiding him for the indiscretion of his last Guildhall speech. "But everybody knows that Knowsley is nothing if not indiscreet," Rollo said; and he knew that, after all, whatever anyone might say to the contrary, Lady Martingale *had* gone off with Charley Crowther, acknowledging that nothing in the world was of any consequence to her in comparison. "Such an infatuation!" for, as everybody knew, Charley was no Adonis. Lady Caroline shook her head over this, as she ate her chicken (or probably it was something much nicer than chicken that Lady Caroline ate). And thus the *menu* was worked through. There was but one young lady in the party, and even she was married. In Augusta's time the young people were always represented, but it did not matter so much now. When all these ladies rose at last in their heavy dresses that swept the carpet, and in their diamonds which made a flicker and gleam of light about their heads and throats, and swept out to the drawing-room: all, with that one exception, over middle age, all well acquainted with each other, knowing the pedigrees and the possessions each of each, and with society in general for their common ground, the reader will tremble to think of such a poor little thing as Lottie, in her white muslin, with the roses in her hair, standing trembling in a corner of the big drawing-room, and waiting for the solemn stream of silk and satin, and society, in which she would have been engulfed at once, swallowed up and seen no more. And what would have happened to Lottie, had she been alone, without anyone to stand by her in the midst of this overflowing, we shrink from contemplating; but happily she had already found a companion to hold head with her against the stream.

For when Lottie came in, she found some one before her in the drawing-room, a tall, very thin man, with stooping shoulders, who stood by the corner of the mantelpiece, on which there were candles, holding a book very close to his eyes. When Lottie went in, with her heart in her mouth, he turned round, thinking that the opening of the door meant the coming of the ladies. The entrance, instead, of the one young figure, white and slender, and of Lottie's eyes encountering him, full of fright and anxiety, yet with courage in them—the look that was intended for Lady Caroline, and which was half a prayer, "Be kind to me!" as well as perhaps the tenth part of a defiance—made a great

impression upon the solitary inmate of the room. He was as much afraid of what he thought a beautiful young lady, as Lottie was of the mistress of the house.

After this first moment, however, when she perceived that there was nobody alarming, only a gentleman (an *old* gentleman, Lottie contemptuously, or rather carelessly concluded, though he was not more in reality than about five-and-thirty), she regained her composure, and her heart went back to its natural place. Lottie knew very well who the gentleman was, though he did not know her. It was Mr. Ashford, one of the minor canons, a very shy and scholarly person, rather out of his element in a community which did not pretend to much scholarship or any special devotion to books. Perhaps he was the only man in St. Michael's whom Lottie had ever really desired to make acquaintance with on his own account; but indeed it was scarcely on his own account, but on account of Law, about whom she was always so anxious. Mr. Ashford took pupils, with whom he was said to be very successful. He lived for his pupils, people said, and thought of nothing else but of how to get them into shape and push them on. It had been Lottie's dream ever since she came to St. Michael's to get Law under Mr. Ashford's care; and after she had recovered the shock of getting into the room, and the mingled thrill of relief and impatience at finding that there was nobody there as yet to be afraid of, Lottie, whose heart always rose to any emergency, began to speculate how she could make friends with Mr. Ashford. She was not afraid of him: he was short-sighted, and he was awkward and shy, and a great deal more embarrassed by her look than she was by his. And he was being badly used—much more badly used than she was. For Lottie reflected, with indignation, that to ask a gentleman like Mr. Ashford, after dinner, was an insult to him, and that he must therefore stand in need of consolation and support. She ranged herself by him instantly, instinctively. They were the two who were being condescended to, being taken notice of—they were the natural opponents consequently of the fine people, the people who condescended and patronised. Mr. Ashford, on his side, stood and looked at her, and did not know what to do. He did not know who she was. She was a beautiful young lady, and he knew he had seen her in the Abbey; but further than this Mr. Ashford knew nothing of Lottie. The signs which would have betrayed her lowly condition to an experienced eye said nothing to him. Her white muslin might have been satin for anything he could tell, her little pearl locket a priceless ornament. He did not know how to address such a dazzling creature, though to any ordinary person in society Lottie's attire would have suggested bread-and-butter, and nothing dazzling at all.

"It is a beautiful evening," said Lottie, a little breathless. "It is scarcely dark yet, though it is half-past nine o'clock."

To both these unquestionable statements Mr. Ashford said "Yes," and then he felt himself called upon to make a contribution in return.

"I have just found a book which somebody must have been reading," he said, growing red with the effort.

"Oh, yes; is it a very interesting book? What is it about?" said Lottie, but this was something for which Mr. Ashford was not prepared. He got redder than ever and cleared his throat.

"Oh! it does not seem about anything in particular. I have not really had time to read it;" then he made a hasty dash at an abstract subject, and said, with a falter in his voice, "Are—are you fond of reading?" This question at once lit up Lottie's face.

"Oh, *very*, very fond! But I have not many books nor much time. I always envy people who can read everything they please. Mr. Ashford, I wonder if I might speak to you about something—before they come in," said Lottie, coming a step nearer, and looking eagerly at him with her dangerous blue eyes.

Mr. Ashford got the better of his shyness in a moment. It did not embarrass him when there was anything to be done. He smiled upon her with a most beautiful beaming smile which altogether changed the character of his face, and put a chair for her, which Lottie, however, did not take. "Surely," he said, in his melodious voice, suddenly thawed out of the dryness which always got into his throat when he spoke first to a stranger. It has not yet been said that Mr. Ashford's chief quality as respected the community at St. Michael's was an unusually beautiful mellow voice. This was his chief claim, as it was Lottie's only one, to entertainment at the Deanery. "If there is any way in which I can be of use to you?" he said.

"Oh yes; so much use! They say you think a great deal about your pupils, Mr. Ashford," said Lottie, "and I have a brother whom nobody thinks much about—"

That was the moment Lady Caroline chose to return to the drawing-room. The door opened, the ladies swept in one by one, the first looking suspiciously at both Mr. Ashford and Lottie, the second, who knew Mr. Ashford, giving him a smile of recognition, and looking suspiciously only at Lottie, the rest following some one example, some the other. Lottie knew not one of them. She looked trembling for Lady Caroline, and hoped she would be kind, and save her from the utter desolation of standing alone in this smiling and magnificent company. But Lady Caroline coming in last of all, only made her usual salutation to the stranger. She said, "Good evening, Miss Despard," as she swept her long train of rustling silk over the carpet close to Lottie's trembling feet, but she put out her hand to Mr. Ashford. "It was so good of you to come," she said. Alas! Lottie was not even to have the comfort of feeling on the same footing with the Minor Canon. He was carried off from her just as he had begun to look on her with friendly eyes. The stream floated towards the other side of the room, where Lady Caroline seated herself on her favourite square sofa. Lottie was left standing all alone against the soft grey of the wall, lighted up by the candles on the

mantel-piece. When a person belonging to one class of society ventures to put a rash foot on the sacred confines of another, what has she to expect? It is an old story, and Lottie had gone through it before, and ought to have had more sense, you will say, than to encounter it again. But the silly girl felt it as much as if she had not quite known what would happen to her. She stood still there feeling unable to move, one wave of mortification and indignation going over her after another. How could they be so cruel? What did they ask her for if they meant to leave her to stand there by herself? And Mr. Ashford, too, was cruel. She had made up her mind to stand by him; but he had been carried away by the first touch; he had not stood by her. Lottie could have torn off the roses with which she had decked herself so hopefully, and stamped her foot upon them. She almost wished she had the courage to do it, to cry out to those careless people and let them see what unkindness they were doing. Meantime she made a very pretty picture without knowing it. "Look at that pretty, sulky girl against the wall," said the young married lady to her mother. "Lady Caroline must have set her there on purpose to look handsome and ill-tempered. How handsome she is! I never saw such eyelashes in my life; but as sulky as a thunder-cloud."

"Go and talk to her and then she will not be sulky," said the mother, who, though by instinct she had looked suspiciously at Lottie, was not unkind; nay, was a kind woman when she saw any need for it. Neither were the others unkind—but they did not see any need for it. It was Lady Caroline's business, they thought, to entertain her own guests.

Lottie, however, had her triumph later when she sang, all the whispered conversation in the room stopping out of sheer astonishment. Her voice had developed even within the last month or two, during which there had been no singing in the Deanery, and as the Signor, who had come in after his practising, played her accompaniments for her, and did his very best to aid and heighten the effect of her songs, her success was complete. He had never accompanied her before, which was a fact Lottie did not remember. And she did not notice either in her preoccupation, thinking nothing of this but much of less important matters—that he knew everything she could sing best, and humoured, and flattered, and coaxed her voice to display itself to the very fullest advantage, as only a skilful accompanist can. No doubt he had his motive. As for Rollo Ridsdale, he stood on the other side of the piano looking at Lottie with a gaze which seemed to go through and through her. It meant in fact the real enthusiasm of a man who knew exactly what such talent was worth, and the less practical but still genuine enthusiasm of the amateur who knew what the music was worth as well as the voice. In the one point of view he saw Lottie's defects, in the other he saw all that could be made of her. An English prima-donna! a real native talent as good as anything that ever came out of Italy, and capable of producing any amount of national enthusiasm! Rollo's eyes shone, his face lighted up, he did not know how to express his delight. He said to himself that

she would make "all our fortunes," with an exaggeration common to his kind. "I knew I was to be charmed, Miss Despard, but I did not know what delight was in store for me," he said, with eyes that said still more than his words. Lottie's eyes with their wonderful lashes sank before his. He thought it was perhaps a pretty trick to show that remarkable feature, and since he was sensible at all points to the beautiful, he did full justice to them. By Jove! how well she would look on the stage. Those eyelashes themselves! that pose! What a pensive Marguerite, what a Lucia she would make!" He longed to rush up to town by the late train and rush upon his astonished partner, shouting, "I have found her!" "You will not deny me one more?" he said, turning to her with glowing eyes.

Poor silly Lottie! She grew crimson with pleasure and excitement, pale with excitement and feeling. What did she know about the young fellow's motives? She knew only that he had kept watch at her window, lounging about for a glimpse of her, a thing which to be sure explains itself; and that every note she sang seemed to make him happier and happier, and more and more adoring. The incense was delicious to her. She had never had it before (except perhaps from poor young Purcell—a nobody! what did he matter?), and the happiness of flattered vanity and soothed pride raised her to a pinnacle and climax of soft delight, such as she had never thought possible. It seemed almost more than Lottie could bear. Even Lady Caroline was so flattered by the plaudits addressed to her on the entertainment she had provided for her guests, that a sense of superior discrimination came over her placid mind, pleasantly exciting its tranquillity. "Yes, I knew that she was going to have a beautiful voice," she said. And she smiled, and accepted the thanks with an agreeable sense that she had deserved them. As for Rollo Ridsdale, it was he who got Miss Despard's shawl and wrapped her in it when the dreadful moment came, as he said, for her departure. "You have no carriage; you live on the other side of the way; then you must permit me to see you to your door," he said, "and to thank you once more for all the pleasure you have given me. This will be a white day in my recollection; I shall begin the dates in my history from the time when I first heard——"

"Mr. Ashford is going Miss Despard's way. And, Rollo, your aunt wants you, I think. We have all been so much delighted that we have forgotten the progress of time, and Lady Caroline is not very strong. Mr. Ashford," said the Dean, "I am sure we may leave to you the privilege of seeing Miss Despard to her own door."

"And I am here," said the Signor. Nevertheless, poor Lottie felt as if she had stepped suddenly out of heaven to earth again when she found herself between the musician and the Minor Canon outside the Deanery door.

CHAPTER VI.

LAW.

LAW went with his sister dutifully to the door in the great cloister. He did not care much for the honour and glory of going to the Deanery, but he was pleased to walk with Lottie in her pretty evening dress with the roses in her hair. This gave him a certain gratification and sense of family pride, though he scoffed at that sentiment in general. Law did not feel that on the whole he had much to be proud of. Still, he was proud of Lottie, who was a creature quite out of the common, and like nobody else he had ever seen. He waited till the Deanery door was opened to her. That was a world of which Law knew nothing, and did not want to know anything. How Lottie had managed to get among these fine people, and why she liked to get among them, were equally strange to him. He admired her for the first, and wondered at her for the last. She was the only lady belonging to the Chevaliers who had ever got footing in the Deanery; and this was just like Lottie, just what he would have expected from her, he said to himself; but how she could stand those old fogies, with their pride and their finery, that was what he could not tell. All the same, it gave him a certain gratification to leave her there in her element among the great people. And when the door closed upon him Law went off about his own business. He went through the cloister, and a curious little back cloister beyond—for there were many intricacies about the Abbey, the different degrees of the hierarchy being very distinct, one cloister for the Chapter, another for the Minor people, and a third for the lay clerks. He went through the little square of the minor cloister, and came out upon a stone staircase which abridged the slopes of St. Michael's Hill, and led straight down into the town. The lights had begun to be lighted in the picturesque street which wound round the foot of the hill; they twinkled here and there in the shops opposite, and appeared in glimmers in the villages across the river. The dim misty plain lying doubly broad in the twilight, stretching out vaguely to the sky, was here and there defined by one of those twinkles which showed where a group of houses stood together. The town was all out in the streets, and on the river this lovely evening: boats floating dimly about the stream, people walking vaguely up and down the hill. And the air was filled with pleasant, soft, uncertain sounds of talking, of footsteps, now and then the clocks chiming or striking, and a bugle sounding faint and far from where the soldiers were quartered, for there was a military depot not far off. Law stopped at the head of the Steps, as they were called, and looked down over all this scene. The mere notion of being out in the *grand air*, as the French call it, with somehow a fuller sense of space and width than we can find a word for, was pleasant to Law; but if he paused, it was neither to enjoy the picture before him, nor was it because he had no definite place to go to. He knew

very well where he was going. No vagueness on that point was in his mind, and he did not care a brass farthing for the landscape; but he paused at the head of the Steps and looked about, just as a child will pause before eating his cake, a pause of anticipation and spiritual enjoyment of the dainty before it goes to his lips. Then he ran down the steps three at a time, skimming down the long flights, turning the corners like a bird. To take care of his sister had been duty, but Law was about his own business now.

What was Law's business? In all St. Michael's there was not a more idle boy. He was over eighteen, and he did nothing. Vague hopes that he would get some appointment—that something would turn up for him—that he would suddenly awake and find himself in an office somehow, doing something and making money—had been in his own mind and that of his family all his life. Law had no objection. Had some one taken him and set him down at once in any office, it was quite possible that he might have done the best he could in his place, and succeeded as well as most men; but in the meantime there were a great many preliminaries to go through, for which Law had never been required or encouraged to fit himself. In these days of examination, when the pitifullest little bit of an office builds up those prickly thorns, those red-hot ploughshares before its door, how was he to get into any office without education? He had spent all his earlier years, as has been seen, in eluding school as cleverly as possible, and doing as little as he could of his lessons; and now here he was on the verge of manhood, with nothing to do and no great wish to do anything;—a great, straight, powerful young fellow, without any absolute aim or tendency to evil, but good for nothing, not capable of anything, with neither purpose nor object in his life. He could row very well when anyone would give him an oar. He was not amiss at cricket when anyone asked him to play. He could walk with any man, and had won a race or two, and was quite capable of competing for a high jump, or for throwing a cricket-ball, or any of those useful accomplishments; but as for anything else he was not capable. He hated books with that sincere and earnest hatred which seems possible only to those who know books to be the preliminary of everything—a peculiarity of this examining age. Never before surely was such a candid and thorough detestation of the tools of knowledge possible. Law knew that no door could possibly open to him without them, and therefore he hated and despised them, illogically no doubt, but very cordially all the same; and so went drifting along upon the stream, not asking what was to become of him, never thinking much of the subject, though he suffered greatly from want of pocket-money, and would gladly have made some exertion from time to time to obtain that, had he known what to do.

This want of pocket-money is the grand drawback to the education or no education of the youths of the nineteenth century. So long as they can have enough of that, what a pleasant life is theirs!

For it does you no particular harm to be supposed to be "working for an examination," so long as you don't work much for that, and are exempted, for the sake of it, from all other kinds of work. Boating and cricketing and running races, and every kind of exercise, are known now-a-days to be compatible with the hardest mental labour, and he is a stern parent indeed who interferes with his son's training in such essential points. But all these delights are more or less dependent upon pocket-money. Law, whose bread and cheese had never yet failed, and whose conscience was not active, would have found his life quite pleasant but for that; but it was hard upon him not to be able to pay his subscription to a cricket club, nor the hire of a boat, nor even the entry-money for a race, though that was sure to repay itself abundantly if he won it. This was very hard upon him, and often stimulated him to the length of a resolution that he would work to-morrow and conquer all his subjects, and "scrape through" by sheer force of will, so as to have an income of his own. But the habit of idleness unfortunately overcame the resolution next morning, which was a pity, and Law "loafed," as he himself said, not being able to afford to "do anything." It is needless to inform the instructed who have to do with youths working for examinations, that it is cricket and boating and athletics these heroes mean when they talk of "having something to do."

Law, however, had a pleasure before him which had no connection with pocket-money. He went straight down with the directness of habit, till he came to a lane very tortuous and narrow, crowded with builders' yards and coal-merchants, and affording glimpses of the little wharves where a little traffic was carried on, edging the river. Threading his way through them, he came to a red brick house, the front of which overhung the stream with its projecting gable. Law went in through a door which stood open always, and showed signs of much and constant use. There were lodgings upstairs, which were very pleasant in summer, and which were always let, and made a very comfortable item in the earnings of the family; but it was not upstairs that Law went, though that would have done him good. On the first floor, in the room with the square window, which overlooked and indeed overhung the river, the excellent curate was living with whom Law occasionally "read," and to whom no doubt he would have said he was going had Lottie seen him at this door. But Law had no intention of disturbing the curate, who for his part did not want his pupil. He passed the staircase altogether, and pushed open a green baize door, beyond which was a short passage leading into a room, all ablaze with gas. The door of the room was wide open, and so were the windows, to admit all the air that was possible, and round the large table between sat three or four young women working and talking. They were very busy; the great table was covered with silk and muslin, and all kinds of flimsy trimming, and though they chatted they were working as for bare life. As Law sauntered in they all looked up for a moment, and threw a smile

or a nod or half a dozen words at him, but scarcely intermitted a stitch. "We're awful busy; we can't so much as look at you; we've got some wedding things to finish for to-morrow," said one fair-haired girl who seemed specially to appropriate his visit. She pushed her chair a little aside without pausing in her work, as if accustomed to make room for him; and Law took a chair and placed it sideways, so that he could lean his idle elbow on the table between this busy needlewoman and the rest. Perhaps as a stormy sea gives zest to the enjoyment of tranquillity on shore, so the extreme occupation of this workroom made him feel his own absolute leisure more delightful.

"Who is going to be married?" he said.

"Oh, you know just as well as I do. I am sure you have heard us talking of it for the last week. Polly, didn't you tell Mr. Despard all about it? It's a lady, you know. It's Miss Hare at the Golden Eagle, who is one of your papa's great friends. I don't know what the Captain will do when she's gone. Polly, do you?"

"I don't know what the Captain has to do with her, nor me neither," said the young lady at the head of the table. The rest of the girls were sisters, with fair frizzy locks a little out of order after the long day's work, what with the warmth of the room, and the fluttering of the faint breeze from the river that ruffled the well-crimped tresses. But Polly was of a different stamp. She had a mountain of dark brown hair upon her head in plaits and curls and puffs innumerable, and though she was sallow in complexion, had commanding features, a grand aquiline nose, and brilliant eyes. "The Captain nor me, we haven't much to say to that sort," said Polly. "I don't go with them that has a word and a laugh for everybody. What I like is a young lady that respects herself. If you work for your living, that's not to say that you ain't as good as the best of them. Stick up for yourself, and other folks will think of you according, that's what I say."

"I am sure Miss Hare always sticks up for herself," said the girl by Law's side. "Going to be married in a veil, like one of the quality!"

"And so would I, if it was me," cried Polly. "The quality! What are they better than us, only they've got a pocketful of money. If I was the Queen, I'd do away with them all. I'd be the Queen, and all the rest should be the people. There shouldn't be one more than another, or one greater than another, only me. And then shouldn't I do whatever I pleased, and cut off their heads if they said a word!"

This instinctive perception of the secret of despotism made Law laugh, who thought he knew a great deal better. "It would be a funny world with Queen Polly over it," he said. "I hope you'd take me for your prime minister."

Polly gave him a look of saucy malice. "I'd take the Captain," she said.

"Has he been here to-night, Emma? I think he's always coming

here," said Law, under his breath. It was a kind of growl which the young fellow gave out when he spoke low, in the voice which not very long ago had been treble, a soprano, as clear and pure as Lottie's—but it was extremely bass now.

"He wants to know," said Emma, with a glance at the others as she pinned her work straight, "if the Captain has been here;" upon which there was a chorus of laughter, making Law red and angry. He turned upon them with a furious look.

"I should like to know how you would all like it," said the boy, "if your governor were to come poking in the very same place where——".

"Oh, you may make yourself quite easy, Mr. Lawrence," said Polly, with a toss of her elaborately dressed head. "He don't meddle with you. The Captain is a man of taste, he ain't a boy like some folks. He knows what's what, the Captain does. Other girls may have their fancies; I don't say anything against that, but give me a man as knows the world, and knows what he wants. That's the sort for me."

"She gets more insufferable than ever. I wonder how you can put up with her," said Law under his breath.

"Doesn't she!" said Emma in a whisper. "I wish she had never come into our workroom; but she has taste, mother says, and we have to put up with it. Everything has to give way to the work," the girl added, threading her needle; and as she made a knot upon the end of the new thread, she shook her head with a sigh.

Everything has to give way to the work! Law could not but smile, feeling the superiority of his gentlemanhood. With him it was the work that gave way to everything. "Poor little Em!" he said, with a little laugh. She was only seventeen, a year younger than he was; her forefinger was seamed into furrows with her needle, and sometimes bled, which called forth no sympathy, but only scoldings, from the forewoman or her mother, when an unlucky red mark appeared on a hem. Emma did not very much mind the scoldings, which came natural to her, and she never made any comparison of herself with Law. He was a *gentleman*, that made all the difference. And it was a great deal nicer, and much more important, to have such a fine fellow to keep company with, than a young painter or carpenter, or even a tailor, which was what 'Liza had to be content with. Mr. Despard was a very different sort of person. As Law whispered to her, Emma felt her heart swell with pride. She went on with her work all the same, sometimes threatening to prick him with the needle which was at the end of that long thread. Emma was only "running a skirt," not trusted as yet with the more difficult parts of the work, and she pointed her needle at Law's nose when he came too close. But it was very sweet to her to have him there. Polly might brag as she pleased of the Captain—the Captain was old, and what was the good of him? He did nothing but puff Polly up with pride, the younger girls thought, and nothing would ever come of it. But Law was young, and there was no telling what might

come of that. Emma threatened him with her needle, but in her heart was very proud of him. And there he sat and talked to her, while Lottie was having her little triumph among all the fine people at the Rectory. The Welting girls were all pleased to have Law there. They liked to talk of Mr. Despard, "from the Castle," and how they "could not keep him out of their workroom." By and by they began to joke about his idleness, the only idle one among so busy a company. "Can't you give him something simple to do—a skirt to run up or a long hem?" "Oh yes," said Emma. "Do, Polly, he bothers me so I can't get my skirt done." Polly opened her drawer, and drew out from it the current number of a distinguished periodical, which all these young women admired.

"I'll tell you what he can do," she said, "and make himself useful—for we've got to sit up all night a'most, and there's nothing makes work go like reading out loud. Mr. Lawrence, if you want to be as good as your professions, and help us young ladies on, as are far harder worked than the like of you knows of even, there's the last number of the *Family Herald*, and we're all that anxious, we don't know how to bear it, to hear how Lady Araminta got on——"

"Oh, give it me," said Emma, with her eyes sparkling. "Oh, give it me! Oh, you nasty cruel creature, to have it in your drawer all the time, and never to tell!"

"I'll give it to Mr. Despard," said Polly; "and we'll all be done half as soon again if he'll read it out loud——"

"Give it here," said Law with lordly good-nature, and he began at once upon his task. How the needles flew as he read! Lady Araminta was a wonderful heroine. She wore nothing less than velvet and satin, and carried her diamonds about with her wherever she went, and the title deeds of her estate in the bosom of her dress. Law leaned his long arm on the table, sometimes pausing to take breath and playing with Emma's pins and cotton. He would thus tantalize them now and then when the story grew most exciting and his auditors most breathless. He was *bon prince* among them all, very good-natured and willing to please them, though Emma had his special vows. His head was not so much turned as was the head of virtuous Lottie, listening to the applause of Mr. Rollo Ridsdale, but he was very happy with this little court about him all the same.

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